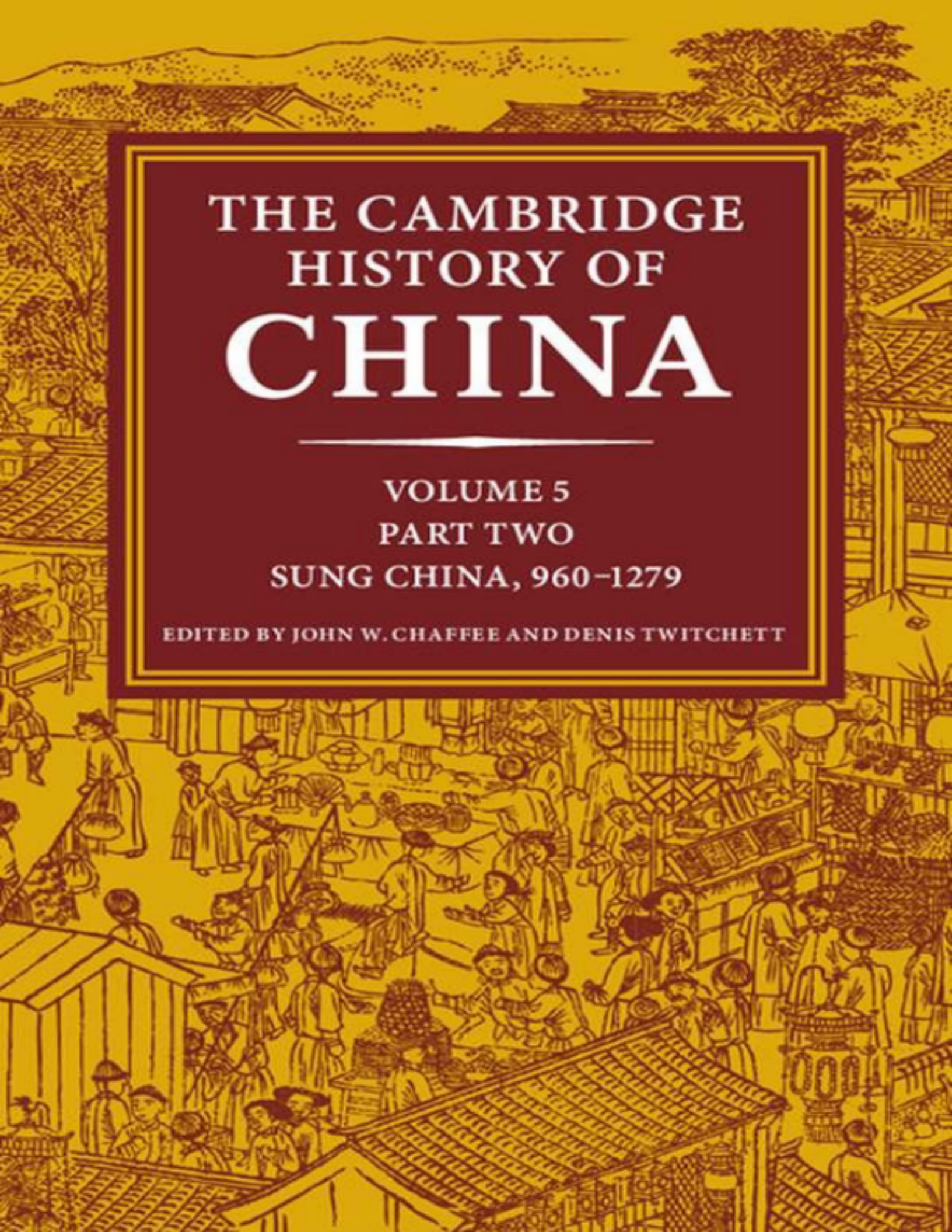




THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF CHINA

VOLUME 5
PART TWO
SUNG CHINA, 960–1279

EDITED BY JOHN W. CHAFFEE AND DENIS TWITCHETT

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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY
OF CHINA

General Editors

DENIS TWITCHETT and JOHN K. FAIRBANK

Volume 5

Part Two: Sung China, 960–1279





Map 1. Political map of the Northern Sung, c. 1100. Reprinted by permission from *The Times Atlas of China*, P.J.M. Geelan and Denis C. Twitchett, eds. (London: Times Books, 1974).

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CONTENTS

<i>List of tables and figures</i>	<i>page</i> xi
<i>List of maps</i>	xii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xiii
<i>Preface</i>	xv
Introduction: reflections on the Sung	I
by JOHN W. CHAFFEE, <i>Binghamton University, State University of New York</i>	
A weak dynasty?	2
Economic dynamism	3
Assertions of authority	7
Sung Confucianism	10
Elites and their output	12
A religious society	15
The Sung in Chinese history	16
I Sung government and politics	19
by CHARLES HARTMAN, <i>University at Albany, State University of New York</i>	
Introduction	19
A bibliographic prelude	24
The unfinished character of the Sung state	27
The literatus as civil servant	32
Literati ideas about government	35
The literati character of Sung government	43
The civil service system	49
The Sung monarchy	80
Government decision making	112

2	The Sung fiscal administration by PETER J. GOLAS, <i>University of Denver</i>	139
	Introduction	139
	Agriculture and the countryside	158
	Labor service	167
	Cities, commercial taxes, and monopolies	175
	Disbursements	192
	The monetary system	207
	Conclusion	211
3	A history of the Sung military by WANG TSENG-YÜ, <i>Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing</i>	214
	The organization of the military in the early Sung	214
	The military history of the Northern Sung	220
	Weapons, logistics, and technology	233
	The military history of the Southern Sung	238
4	Chinese law and legal system: Five Dynasties and Sung by BRIAN MCKNIGHT, <i>University of Arizona</i>	250
	Introduction	250
	Five Dynasties law	250
	The Sung legal system	253
	Conclusion	283
5	Sung education: schools, academies, and examinations by JOHN W. CHAFFEE, <i>Binghamton University, State University of New York</i>	286
	Introduction	286
	Methods of recruitment	287
	Early Sung developments	288
	The Ch'ing-li reforms	293
	Policy debates: quotas and curriculum	295
	Wang An-shih's reforms	298
	The Three Hall System	300
	The early Southern Sung: survival and reconstruction	305
	Southern Sung government schooling	305
	The academy movement	309
	Examinations in the Southern Sung	312
	Conclusion: the Sung educational order	318

6	Economic change in China, 960–1279	321
	by JOSEPH P. McDERMOTT, <i>Cambridge University</i> , and SHIBA YOSHINOBU, <i>Toyo Bunko</i>	
	Introduction	321
	Late T'ang to early Sung (742–1080)	326
	Middle Sung (1080–1162)	385
	Late Sung (1163–1276)	409
7	China's emergence as a maritime power	437
	by ANGELA SCHOTTENHAMMER, <i>Salzburg University</i>	
	Introduction	437
	Political and economic background	439
	Sea routes and maritime accounts	440
	Nautical and shipbuilding technology	450
	The Sung navy	454
	Official administration of maritime trade	460
	Exchange of commodities	491
	Conclusion	523
8	Sung society and social change	526
	by ROBERT HYMES, <i>Columbia University</i>	
	Introduction	526
	Printing and reading	542
	Women and gender	568
	Religion	595
	Elites, locality, and the state	621
	Conclusion	661
9	Reconceptualizing the order of things in Northern and Southern Sung	665
	by PETER K. BOL, <i>Harvard University</i>	
	The Sung intellectual legacy	665
	Culture and ideology, 960–1030	670
	From learning to politics: the Fan Chung-yen faction	674
	The search for coherent systems and methods in the mid-eleventh century	681
	Finding an alternative to the New Learning	708
	Trends in Southern Sung intellectual culture	721

10	The rise of the <i>Tao-hsiieh</i> Confucian fellowship in Southern Sung by HOYT CLEVELAND TILLMAN, <i>Arizona State University</i>	727
	The first period, 1127-1162	732
	The second period, 1163-1181	737
	The third period, 1182-1202	759
	The fourth period, 1202-1279	781
	Conclusion	788
	<i>Bibliography</i>	791
	<i>Index</i>	885

TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLES

1. Numbers of civil and military graded officials	page 53
2. Personal-rank grades: civil-administrative and executory-class officials	61
3. Subjects in the civil service examinations	289
4. Sung government schools classified by earliest references per decade	296
5. Incidence per decade of constructive activity at 64 prefectural and 108 county schools	308
6. Geographical distribution of private schools	310
7. Census reports, AD 2-1190	328
8. North and south China household distribution	328
9. Regional variations in household population, c. 756 and c. 1080	329
10. Changes in household population by circuit during the Sung	330
11A. Regional population changes from 742 to 1213 (thousand households)	331
11B. Summary of regional population changes	333
12. Mineral tax quotas (806-1165)	378
13. Maritime trade offices (<i>shih-po ssu</i>) and maritime trade bureaus (<i>shih-po wu</i>)	474
14. Government income derived from maritime trade, 960-1180s (in strings of bronze cash)	487

FIGURES

1. "Chi-nan Liu Family's Skillful Needle Shop" (Sung advertisement).	558
2. "Alerting the world."	566
3. "Chart for making the most of your days."	566

MAPS

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 1. Political map of the Northern Sung, c. 1100. | <i>page</i> ii |
| 2. Seaports and naval bases in the Southern Sung (1127–1279)
Source: Lo Jung-pang, "Maritime commerce and its relation to
the Sung navy," <i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the
Orient</i> 12 No. 1 (January 1969), p. 65. | 472 |
| 3. Maritime Asia during the Sung. | 511 |

ABBREVIATIONS

CMC	<i>Ming-kung shu-p'an Ch'ing-ming chi</i>
CSW	<i>Ch'üan Sung wen</i>
CWTS	<i>Chiu Wu-tai shih</i>
CYTC	<i>Chien-yen i-lai Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi</i>
HCP	<i>Hsü tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien</i>
SHT	<i>Sung hsing-t'ung</i>
SHY	<i>Sung hui-yao chi-kao</i>
SKCS	<i>Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu</i>
SKCSCP	<i>Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen</i>
SPPY	<i>Ssu-pu pei-yao</i>
SPTK	<i>Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an</i>
SS	<i>Sung shih</i>
SYHA	<i>Sung Yüan hsüeh-an</i>
TFYK	<i>Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei</i>
TLSI	<i>T'ang-lü shu-i</i>
WHTK	<i>Wen hsien t'ung k'ao</i>
WTHY	<i>Wu-tai hui-yao</i>
Yao-lu	<i>Chien-yen i-lai hsi-nien yao-lu</i>
YH	<i>Yü-bai</i>
YTC	<i>Ch'ung-chiao Yüan-tien-chang liu-shih chüan</i>

PREFACE

This volume has a history of its own. In 1966, my late coeditor Denis Twitchett, then “a spry forty-one-year-old” – as he put it – undertook the Herculean task of overseeing, with John K. Fairbank, the creation of *The Cambridge history of China*. This project, which was to occupy him the rest of his life, has to date resulted in fifteen “volumes” with twenty-two individual books, truly one of the great scholarly accomplishments of recent years, rivaled in the field of sinology only by Joseph Needham’s *Science and civilisation in China*.

Even as Denis was working to put together the first volumes of the premodern period – Sui and T’ang (1979), Ch’in and Han (1986) and Ming (1988)¹ – a parallel development was under way that informed the beginnings of the Sung volumes, namely the emergence of Sung studies. According to Conrad Schirokauer, this had its origins at a gathering of half a dozen scholars, Twitchett among them, with a shared sense of the importance of the Sung in Chinese history and a conviction that its study was ripe for development.² From this informal gathering, subsequently referred to as “Sung I,” came the “Sung II Conference” at Feldafing on the Starnbergsee outside Munich in 1971, at which fourteen papers were presented, the first research conference devoted to the Sung outside East Asia. This was a period of ambitious scholarly endeavors in Sung studies, exemplified by the Sung Project, with a Biographical Section led by Herbert Franke and a Bibliographical Section under Yves Hervouet, as well as the beginning of the Sung volume of *The Cambridge history of China*.

I do not know the specifics of that beginning, but can date it to the first half of the 1970s, for in 1986 Denis convened a group of scholars at Princeton to move the Sung volumes forward (even then the plan was to have two parts: historical and topical), and among a number of completed papers on which he

¹ The second part of the Sui and T’ang volume is as yet unpublished.

² Conrad Schirokauer, “Remembering Sung I,” *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies* 40 (2010), pp. 1–6.

intended to build was one on Northern Sung government by my late adviser, Edward Kracke, who had died in 1976. Amid general enthusiasm a number of additional papers were commissioned, mine among them, to fill out the two volumes. Unfortunately that enthusiasm did not translate into timely results. A number of manuscripts were submitted while others were delayed from year to year, and in the meantime Denis, by his own account, found himself consumed with the completion of Volume 6 on *Alien regimes and border states* (Liao, Chin and Yüan) and by the second Ming volume (Volume 8, Part 2). Then in the year 2000 he recruited Paul Jakov Smith and me to serve as coeditors of Parts 1 and 2 respectively.

When I began working with Denis on this volume, we had a collection of draft chapters, some quite new but others dating back to the 1970s and in sore need of revision. Of the authors who had submitted drafts prior to the 1986 meeting, Peter Golas and Brian McKnight were ready and able to revise theirs (and, as things turned out, to revise them more than once), and now will finally see them appear in print. For three manuscripts, however, authorial revisions were out of the question. Edward Kracke had died in 1976; James T. C. Liu, who had written on Southern Sung government, had died in 1993; and Ira Kasoff, who had written on Northern Sung Neo-Confucianism, had long left the profession. With some regret, Denis, Paul, and I decided that the revisions needed to update these chapters adequately would require radical changes and therefore should not be attempted. We therefore decided to commission new chapters in their place. Charles Hartman's chapter on "Sung government and politics" covers the ground that had been treated separately by Kracke and Liu, while Peter Bol expanded his treatment of Northern Sung intellectual culture to treat the Neo-Confucian masters of that period. We also sought chapters on topics that were not a part of the original plan for the volume. Unfortunately, those on Sung literature, foreign relations with the dynasty's continental neighbors, Taoism, and Buddhism did not in the end materialize. However, Angela Schottenhammer's chapter on "China's emergence as a maritime power" proved to be a welcome and important addition, while others, such as Robert Hymes's chapter on "Sung society and social change" and Shiba Yoshinobu and Joseph McDermott's joint chapter on "Economic change in China, 960–1279," assumed an unanticipated breadth and scope.

It has been far too many years since I joined this volume as a coeditor, for several factors slowed its progress. Some authors were slow in their submissions and, at times, in their revisions. The Editorial Office of the Cambridge History in Princeton, while extremely helpful on the whole, at times proved to be a bottleneck. This was particularly the case because its priority was understandably given to the Sung historical volume (Volume 5, Part 1), whose

contributions were ready much earlier and which appeared in 2009, as well as the Ch'ing dynasty Volume 9 (Parts 1 and 2), something I eventually remedied by hiring editorial help at Binghamton for the final editorial work on the volume. The most important factor, however, was the death of Denis in 2006. Although he worked on the volume until almost the end and we had already made the most important decisions concerning the volume by the time of his passing, it was a great loss and made my job as the surviving coeditor a lonely one.

There are several people who should be acknowledged for their contributions to the volume: Denis first and foremost, whose editorial experience was peerless and whose friendship was freely given, and also Paul Smith, whose collaborations, wise counsel, and kind criticisms have proven invaluable. The editorial staff at the Cambridge History's Princeton office provided important assistance for many years, especially Ralph Meyer and Michael Reeve, while Willard Peterson's supervision of the office and ability to keep it funded were remarkable. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Chang Wook Lee, my graduate assistant at Binghamton, who did an enormous amount of the final, painstaking editorial work on the volume. The many editors at Cambridge University Press with whom I have worked were all extremely supportive. To the many contributors to this volume, thank you for your patience. Finally, I would acknowledge the significant support given over the years to the *Cambridge history of China* project by Princeton University's East Asia Program, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Cultural Exchange.

John W. Chaffee

INTRODUCTION: REFLECTIONS ON THE SUNG

John W. Chaffee

This volume, together with its recently published companion volume (Volume 5, Part 1), presents fruits of a half-century of Western scholarship on the history of Sung China (960–1279). “Western” is of course a relative term, for the presence of Chinese and Japanese authors reflects the global character of the Sung history field. It is nevertheless appropriate as a descriptor of the scholarly activity focused on the Sung among European and Anglophonic scholars that has flourished since the 1950s. While drawing heavily on the pioneering work of Japanese scholars and enriched by the postwar flowering of Sung scholarship in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, the works in this volume emerged primarily out of Western discourses on the Sung.

Philosophical profundity; cultural brilliance as seen in unparalleled landscape art, calligraphy, and prose composition; and a sophisticated material culture, but also military and economic weakness, political humiliation, venal ministers and effeminate men: these are some of the characteristics that have traditionally been ascribed to the Sung by historians and the general public, and they help to explain why the Sung has long found little favor among many Chinese, especially when it is compared to the “glorious T’ang” (618–907) that preceded it. All modern scholarship on the Sung, Western and East Asian alike, has had to deal with this characterization of the dynasty that dominated traditional historiography and popular opinions about the period. But ever since the Japanese journalist-turned-scholar Naitō Torajirō (1866–1934) argued in 1914 that a massive economic, social and political transformation beginning in the late T’ang resulted in the beginning of China’s “modern age” (*kinsei*) in the Sung, alternatives to the traditional historiography have flourished, first among Japanese, then among Western and Chinese scholars.¹ From that scholarship has emerged a complex portrait of a dynasty which,

¹ For an excellent recent account of Naitō Torajirō, also known as Naitō Konan, and the impact of his work, see Richard von Glahn, “Imagining Pre-modern China,” in *The Sung–Yuan–Ming transition in Chinese history*, ed. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, MA, 2003), pp. 38–42.

despite its military and geopolitical weakness, was nevertheless economically powerful, culturally brilliant, socially fluid, and the most populous of any empire in world history to that point. It was also a dynasty beset by problems and contradictions, belying simple generalizations.

The contributions to this volume bear witness to the richness and complexity of the Sung historical record and the fruits of recent scholarship. Covering a wide spectrum of topics – government, economy, society, religion, and thought, in roughly that order – they range widely, often well beyond the apparent confines of their topics, frequently intersecting with each other and not always agreeing, for the phenomena with which they are dealing often defy pigeonholing. The result is a rich mixture that offers the reader a portrait of this remarkable period that is detailed, complex, and essentially complementary. In introducing the volume, my goal is to underline that complementarity by identifying themes that cut across the chapters.

A WEAK DYNASTY?

We should begin by acknowledging that there are elements of truth to the traditional portrayal of the Sung. Even during the Northern Sung (960–1127), the dynasty's territorial reach was less than that of any of the other major dynasties, with borders in the northeast that did not include modern Peking, in the northwest that did not extend beyond the eastern end of the Kansu corridor, and in the far south that did not include Yunnan or especially Annam, which had been part of Chinese empires for a thousand years. The catastrophic loss of north China to the Jurchen which resulted in the severely shrunken borders of the Southern Sung (1127–1279), and the lengthy Mongol conquest of the Sung that finally extinguished the dynasty in 1279 provide clear evidence that the Sung could not handle their neighbors as well as the Han (206 BC–AD 220) or T'ang. Moreover, the terms by which the Sung secured peace with the Liao (907–1125), and later the Chin (1115–1234), were to Chinese sensibilities deeply humiliating, involving as they did tribute payments by the Sung and, in the case of the Chin, the Sung emperor addressing his Chin counterpart as "elder brother."

The blame for this unenviable record has generally fallen upon the Sung military and on treacherous political leadership, most notably in the latter case the recall and execution of the iconic Yüeh Fei (1103–42) by the chief counselor Ch'in Kuei (1090–1155) during the first war against the Jurchen. As we learn from Wang Tseng-yü's chapter (and from the entire volume 5, Part 1), the Sung engaged in a great many wars against their varied enemies, and most of them ended poorly. Wang details numerous instances of bad decisions made at the court, poor generalship, and corruption, in addition to badly prepared

troops. But he also describes noteworthy successes in the dynasty's use of the military. Sung T'ai-tsung's (r. 976–97) unsuccessful campaign against the Liao notwithstanding, he and his brother T'ai-tsu (r. 960–76) before him managed to reunify the vast majority of agricultural China while at the same time successfully controlling the military, specifically military governors and the capital army, two challenges that had proved largely insurmountable during the preceding century. The Sung subsequently succeeded in maintaining a huge army – peaking at 1,259,000 troops during the 1040s – that was professional and supported by a well-developed logistical structure and by an armaments industry that excelled at technological military innovation, including the development of gunpowder technologies.² The military's strengths were primarily defensive, necessarily so because of the Sung lack of pastureland and therefore of good horses, but with some obvious exceptions it was a formidable defensive force.³

It is possible, indeed, to flip the common assertion about the weakness of the Sung military and argue instead that it was Sung military strength that preserved it in an age of exceptionally powerful states in Central and East Asia, states that combined the power of highly developed equestrian warfare with sophisticated state systems. In what was the most multipolar East Asian world in Chinese imperial history, the ability of the Sung not merely to survive but to thrive was remarkable, and it is to the economic sources of that thriving that we will now turn.

ECONOMIC DYNAMISM

In their chapter on Sung economic change, Joseph McDermott and Shiba Yoshinobu anchor their account firmly in the late T'ang, a period when the government was unable to maintain its direct controls over economic activity in the countryside (through the equitable-fields measure) and regulated markets in the cities. By allowing virtually unlimited private landownership rather than allotting land to peasants for a lifetime tenure, freeing markets from government regulation, and relying on both land and commercial taxes as well as government monopolies for their revenue, the authorities created the conditions for a fundamental economic transformation. Whether the ensuing change deserves the title of “economic revolution” – as Mark Elvin has claimed

² See Professor Wang's treatment of gunpowder weapons, and also Peter Allan Lorge, *The Asian military revolution: From gunpowder to the bomb* (Cambridge and New York, 2008), pp. 32–44.

³ Sung responses to their chronic lack of warhorses are well treated by Paul Jakov Smith in *Taxing heaven's storehouse: Horses, bureaucrats and the destruction of the Sichuan tea industry, 1074–1224* (Cambridge, MA, 1991).

but McDermott and Shiba resist⁴ – is open to debate, but without question the economic growth in the early Sung was spectacular and unprecedented, and the wealth that it created was manifested in a population which by 1100 had exceeded 100 million for the first time in Chinese history, and in the emergence of a flourishing urban culture and a social elite that was far larger than the aristocratic elite of T'ang times had been.

This much is commonly acknowledged by most scholars. In their chapter, Professors McDermott and Shiba move well beyond these generalizations to present a detailed and complex portrait of the Sung economy. The spread of agricultural technologies and seed types (e.g. early-ripening Champa rice⁵) and increases in cultivated land are presented as factors helping to sustain the growth in population. But the authors also raise the question why the population did not grow yet more, and through their analysis of the individual macroregions within the Sung empire they describe in sobering detail the often devastating impact of famines and epidemics (especially in the north) as well as environmental degradation. Indeed, the environmental costs of both agricultural and industrial practices are a major theme of the chapter and an important part of their question why population growth was not even greater.

McDermott and Shiba also provide a useful tripartite periodization for the economic history of the Sung, namely (1) early Sung (960–1080), a period of expansion characterized by the spectacular rise of the south agriculturally and the industrial development of the capital region around K'ai-feng in the north; (2) middle Sung (1080–1162), a period of continuity up until the catastrophic loss of the north followed by turbulent recovery; and (3) late Sung (1162–1279), a period of frequent warfare and economic decline. While early Sung prosperity and late Sung decline are common themes in most accounts of Sung history, the choice of a middle period spanning rather than breaking at the Northern/Southern Sung divide is unusual. Since that period began with the New Policies of Wang An-shih (1021–86), which involved an unprecedented engagement by the government in agriculture and commerce, its continuation well into the Southern Sung suggests that the continuities over that tumultuous eighty-year period were more significant than either the cessation of the reform policies late in Hui-tsung's reign (c. 1120) or the war with the Chin and loss of the north.

⁴ For Elvin, see *The pattern of the Chinese past* (Stanford, 1973), Part 2.

⁵ Although McDermott and Shiba stress the role of Champa rice and document its use in various localities in southern China, it should be noted that this is a point of some disagreement among economic historians. For a more skeptical view of the role of Champa rice, see Li Po-chung, "Yu-wu 13, 14 shih-chi te chuan-che? Sung-mo tao Ming-chu Chiang-nan nung-yeh te pien-hua," in *Tuo shih-chiao k'an Chiang-nan ching-chi-shih* (Peking, 2003), pp. 21–96.

Commerce is another major theme in the McDermott–Shiba chapter, one that is central to any understanding of the Sung economy. Using the comprehensive list in the *Sung hui-yao chi-kao* (A draft compendium of Sung documents) of tax quotas *c.* 1077 for 2,600 tax stations, they are able to delineate the hierarchical marketing structure through which goods moved and document the ascendance of the south – especially the Lower and Middle Yangtze macro-regions – and the emergence of large and vibrant cities there. They also detail the roles played by developments in boat transport, the spreading use of paper money and instruments of commercial credit, and the creation of joint investment partnerships, all of which served to create a commercial order the likes of which had never before been seen. Indeed, such was the importance of commerce that it features prominently in three other chapters in this volume.

In her chapter on “China’s emergence as a maritime power,” Angela Schottenhammer addresses a topic that has aroused great interest among global historians, namely the central role played by China in a world trading order that spanned maritime Asia from the tenth through fourteenth centuries. In contrast to all other Chinese dynasties save the Mongol Yüan (1270–1368), the Sung not only permitted overseas trade, they also welcomed and facilitated it through the use of maritime trade offices or superintendencies, which taxed incoming goods but also supervised the trade and even aided foreign merchants when they were in need. This did not preclude corrupt practices, as Schottenhammer makes clear, but it created remarkably hospitable and stable conditions for a trade that involved a plethora of goods, most notably exports of ceramics (including porcelain, a new invention), metals, and silk, and, among imports, especially *hsiang-yao*, a term covering aromatics, perfumes, and drugs. For the first time, Chinese merchants in Chinese junks ventured across East and Southeast Asia, joining the ranks of Arab, Persian, Indian, Malay, and Korean traders who were engaged in the trade and who, in many cases, established trading communities in port cities, particularly Kuang-chou (Canton) and Ch’üan-chou. It should also be noted that the revenues from maritime commerce provided a significant if minor source of government revenue; averaging around a half-million strings of cash through much of the first century, these revenues increased to around 1 million strings in the late eleventh century and then 2 million in the early Southern Sung.

In his chapter on Sung government, Charles Hartman makes the striking observation not only that, compared to the Ming (1368–1644), Sung governmental revenues constituted a higher proportion of national revenue, but also that those from nonagricultural sources – commercial taxes and revenues from the government monopolies – were nine times as great. Commercial revenues are a central theme for Peter Golas in “The Sung fiscal administration.” Of course the chapter covers far more than commercial taxes. The

Sung government's approach to fiscal matters was pragmatic and innovative. Thanks in particular to the enormous cost of maintaining a professional military (including a large navy, the great cost of which is documented by Schottenhammer), the dynasty's early fiscal health turned into chronic deficits by the mid-eleventh century. The land taxes, together with their accompanying labor service system, were of great importance but were increasingly unable to keep up with the government's ever-increasing financial needs, so that by the 1070s they accounted for only one-third of government revenues. One response was the development of a professional fiscal administration, whose cadre of career specialists established and implemented policies that met those needs with remarkable success; indeed, Golas credits the economic astuteness of Sung financial officials and their willingness to work with merchants for much of the dynasty's success in fiscal matters.⁶

More specifically, government monopolies (salt, wine, tea, alum, and mining), long a feature of imperial governance, were dealt with pragmatically; in some cases the government exerted maximal control in order to maximize revenues, while in others the same goal led to a loosening of controls in favor of private merchants. The money supply was expanded, in part through such practices as short strings of cash and iron coinage (in regions like Szechwan where copper coins were scarce) and increasingly through the use of paper money, and this served to expand commercial activities. But as Golas documents, it was the commercial taxes – primarily sales and transit taxes – that proved to be the primary underpinnings for the dynasty. Growing from just 4 million strings in the early years of the eleventh century to over 19 million in the 1040s, and reflecting not simply the expansion of trade but the growth of cities, the commercial taxes brought about a fiscal order unique in Chinese imperial history in its relative nondependence on land taxes and the rural economy. Liu Guanglin has gone so far as to argue that the Sung was a fiscal state (*ts'ai-cheng kuo-chia*), collecting revenues primarily through indirect taxes and using a professionalized fiscal administration, an arrangement driven in no small part by the need to support a large professional military.⁷ Whether or not one agrees with Liu's argument, the central role played by commercial and other indirect taxes in the empire's finances undeniably set the Sung apart from other dynasties.

Writing from an entirely different perspective, Robert Hymes in his chapter identifies money and commerce as a fundamental structural feature of

⁶ See Robert Hartwell's classic treatment of finance officials in the Sung bureaucracy: "Financial expertise, examinations, and the formation of economic policy in northern Sung China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 30 No. 2 (February 1971), pp. 281–314.

⁷ Liu Kuang-lin (Liu Guanglin), "Shih-ch'ang, chan-cheng ho ts'ai-cheng kuo-chia – tui Nan Sung fu-shui wen-t'i ti tsai ssu-k'ao," *T'ai-ta li-shih hsiieh-pao* 42 (December 2008), pp. 221–85.

Sung society, especially elite society. This might strike some as a truism, since money – or at least wealth – is essential to all upper classes, and others as wrong in light of the popular image of the Sung as a period of artists and philosophers far removed from the crass concerns of lucre. Yet Hymes demonstrates how references to money and the marketplace are interwoven through poetry, music, and art, and he links the development and spread of porcelain to the declining use of bronze, silver, and gold for domestic objects because of the demand for these metals for currency. He further argues that Neo-Confucianism was driven, at least in part, by resistance to the market, in the articulation of nonmarket or antimarket strategies. Whether or not this was so, he and the other authors make a compelling case for the unprecedented importance of the commercial economy for society as a whole. And what was it that made this possible? I would suggest that a major reason lay in the stability that resulted from strong political institutions, not simply in the area of fiscal administration but across the range of governmental activities and groups.

ASSERTIONS OF AUTHORITY

When Chao K'uang-yin (Sung T'ai-tsu) seized the imperial throne through a military coup in early 960, there was little to indicate that his new Sung dynasty would be anything more than the sixth of the short-lived dynasties that had ruled north China for a half-century. Challenges abounded in the form of powerful neighboring states to the north and south, military leaders with a history of independence from the throne, and administrative institutions weakened by over a century of division and unrest. How he addressed these challenges and, together with his brother T'ai-tsung, reunified the empire is a story detailed in the companion Sung volume (5, Part 1). However, in Charles Hartman's account of Sung government and politics we get a sense of how the dynasty both surmounted its political challenges and managed to create structures and practices that largely defined imperial governance for the following millennium.

The process was not a matter of systematic planning in pursuit of ideal imperial structures. Brian McKnight, in his chapter on Sung law, describes a conservative approach to law in which T'ai-tsu, when issuing the *Sung penal conspectus* (*Sung hsing-t'ung*) in 963, essentially adopted the *Penal conspectus of the Great Chou* (*Ta Chou hsing-t'ung*) and its predecessor, the T'ang code (*T'ang-liü*), virtually without change. Yet he and his successors were quite willing "to adapt Sung practices to current situations," which resulted in their codifying a range of legal instruments even while maintaining the *Sung hsing-t'ung* unchanged, with the result that there were "rules having associated penalties

(*ch'ib*), administrative rules (*ling*), quantitative rules (*ko*), specifications (*shih*), and sometimes explanatory edicts (*shen-ming*)." The extensive development of policing, trial procedures, and penal systems – all of which contributed to Sung successes in effectively asserting local control – are further evidence of pragmatic systems building.

This reluctance to alter inherited structures was also evident in personnel organization. For over a century the Sung maintained the personal rank system of "stipendiary offices" (*chi-lu-kuan*), inherited from the Five Dynasties (907–60), which used administrative titles devoid of their apparent functional meanings to rank officials, employing instead a set of functional positions often assigned as special commissions. Although this was reformed in 1082, a time of true systems building, in general Sung institutional developments derived from pragmatic decisions taken in pursuit of concrete goals which, collectively, resulted in the creation of a distinctive Sung order.

Prominent among those goals was that of control over groups that had in the past threatened the imperium. Wang Tseng-yü describes how the Emperor T'ai-tsu at the start of his reign effectively clipped the wings of the palace army generals who had been the bane of the recent short-lived dynasties, and how the dynasty subsequently established procedures to control the military, even at the cost of military effectiveness. Similarly, Hartman describes how Sung emperors created bureaucratic structures and accompanying restrictions for eunuchs, palace women (and their families), and imperial kin – all groups from the inner palace that had dominated the court in times past – and in the process effectively tamed them. As Hartman explains at some length, one result of this was a monarchical institution that featured, with only a few exceptions, vigorous and effective emperors and a remarkably pacific court culture. The several contested imperial successions and the numerous regencies of dowager empresses all proceeded peacefully, unaccompanied by the massive purges and bloodletting that were common in the Han, T'ang, and Ming.

This curbing of the inner palace had an important corollary, namely an elevated role for civil ministers in imperial governance. Hartman has a section devoted to "The autocratic councilor", in which he describes the exceptional importance of Sung chief councilors, particularly during those periods of sole councilorship: 145 out of the 316 years of the dynasty. These periods include the tenures of Wang An-shih, Ts'ai Ching (1047–1126), and Ch'in Kuei, the latter two condemned by many later historians as evil ministers, but as Hartman notes in his historiographical discussion these judgments have been much colored by ideological biases in the primary sources themselves, thanks to selective editing by adherents of *Tao-hsüeh* (Learning of the Way) in

the Southern Sung and beyond.⁸ These historiographical insights have led to a rethinking of the historical record and, in recent years, revisionist studies of all three of these chief councilors, which have pointed to both accomplishments and complexities in their times in power.⁹ It is important to note, moreover, that the sole councilors always served at the behest of activist emperors, who frequently removed them from office when displeased with their actions or when determined to follow different policies. Thus we should be mindful of the limitations that existed for emperors and chief councilors, especially since both depended on the opinions and efforts of the Sung bureaucracy.

Even more than emperors and chief councilors, the officials – particularly scholar-officials (*shih-ta-fu*) – who staffed the Sung bureaucracy have long been viewed as one of the distinctive, and distinguished, features of the Sung. The primary reason for this was the unprecedented expansion of the civil service examinations and the accompanying spread of education in support of the examinations. Although the “protection privilege” (*yin*), which allowed those from high official families relatively easy access to office, was also important, examinations predominated, especially as a route to higher office. The development of the examination system, described by Hartman and especially Chaffee, provides yet another example of the pragmatic character of Sung institution building. Viewed synchronically, the Sung can be credited with creating a system that was to survive for almost a millennium, characterized by the primacy of the *chin-shih* (presented or advanced scholar) degree, a triennial examination schedule, multiple layers of examinations through which candidates progressed, a palace examination overseen personally by the emperor used primarily for final rankings of the *chin-shih*, anonymous testing procedures, and institutional ties between prefectural schools and the prefectural examinations. We should be mindful, however, that this system did not emerge fully formed. T'ai-tsung's decision in 977 to increase degree numbers dramatically, thereby fundamentally changing the role of examinations in the selection of the civil service, can be seen as the start of a century-long process in which the elements of the examinations described above were developed in response to a series of specific challenges.

⁸ See especially Hartman's “The making of a villain: Ch'in Kuei and Tao-hsüeh,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 58 No. 1 (June 1998), pp. 59–146.

⁹ This revisionism has been particularly marked with regard to Ts'ai Ching and his emperor, Hui-tsung (r. 1100–25). See the essays in Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Maggie Bickford, eds., *Emperor Huizong and late Northern Song China: The politics of culture and the culture of politics* (Cambridge, MA, 2006); Ari Levine's chapter on Hui-tsung in the companion Volume 5, Part 1; Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Accumulating culture: The collections of Emperor Huizong* (Seattle, 2008); and Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Emperor Huizong* (Cambridge, MA, 2014).

Hartman describes two ways in which this classically trained group of select officials made an impact on Sung governance. The extraordinary proliferation of paper documents that is apparent in Sung sources points to the role of the written word, and this in turn allows Hartman to delineate the processes of government, the ways in which the flow of paper through memorials, impeachments, reports, and edicts shaped the political functions. Second is the emergence of literati-dominated government beginning in the early eleventh century. Here we must note a discrepancy between Hartman's use of "literati" in contrast to that of others in this volume, including Bol, Hymes, and Chaffee. Whereas the latter group use the term to refer broadly to classically educated scholars (*shih*) – Hymes's preferred term is "gentlemen" – Hartman draws on the Western notion of a *litteratus* and employs a more restrictive definition of "literati" as "civil officials who served in these upper ranks of Sung government." This allows him to focus upon a group of officials in the Northern Sung who not only participated in some of the most famous reform and antireform programs in Chinese history, but also produced a body of writing about government and statecraft that was to influence scholars and statesmen throughout the rest of the imperial period. Indeed, out of that same group emerged a wide-ranging discourse about history, culture, and philosophy, as well as government, that was to do much to shape China's intellectual landscape for the ensuing millennium.

SUNG CONFUCIANISM

The emergence and rise of Neo-Confucianism or *Tao-hsiieh* or Ch'eng-Chu learning (after Ch'eng I and Chu Hsi) is one of developments for which the Sung is justly famous, given their philosophical brilliance and especially the role played by Chu's thought as orthodox Confucian learning in subsequent dynasties. However, as the chapters by Peter Bol and Hoyt Tillman make clear, the intellectual landscape of Sung Confucianism – its *ju* learning – was complex and variegated, with a wide range of thinkers who often disagreed with each other over basic philosophical issues. Even the *Tao-hsiieh* movement of the Southern Sung – Tillman's focus – exhibited considerably more diversity than later triumphalist accounts suggested.

As the title of his chapter suggests, Bol's concern is to show how Sung Confucian thinkers "reconceptualized the order of things." This was to a large extent a Northern Sung phenomenon whose origins can be traced to the early decades of the dynasty, when a division can be observed between those who saw their task as the recovery of the cultural heritage of the past through the compilation of huge anthologies, and others who were inspired by the "Ancient Style" (*ku-wen*) of writing that had been championed by the

T'ang scholar Han Yü (768–824), who had argued that this emulation of the ancients involved not simply compositional choices but a willingness to seek the values of antiquity in the Classics and to reinterpret them, even if that involved breaking with convention.¹⁰

In the eleventh century, with ever-increasing numbers of scholars entering officialdom thanks in large part to their mastery of the Classics in the examinations, the popularity of the Ancient Style approach, though short-lived, encouraged scholars to break new ground in their writing, whether that involved government, culture, history, morality, or philosophy. This did not result in consensus; the bitter political struggles that characterized the last half-century of the Northern Sung were due, at least in part, to fundamental disagreements over how the Classics should be interpreted. Thus Wang An-shih, whose New Policies (*Hsin-fa*) reforms broke radically with past practices, based them on his “new interpretations” (*hsin-i*) of the Classics, especially the *Rites of the Chou* (*Chou-li*), which described a utopian order that he was determined to emulate. Su Shih (1031–1101) and Ssu-ma Kuang (1019–86) came to be bitter political opponents of Wang’s but, as Bol demonstrates, each in his own way broke new ground in his conceptualization of tradition. Ssu-ma, while a conservative in his prescriptions for the empire, swept away much of the Han cosmological framework that had informed earlier histories in his great history, the *Comprehensive mirror for aid in government* (*Tzu-chih t’ung-chien*). By contrast, Su Shih, along with Ou-yang Hsiu (1007–72) before him and his father Su Hsün (1009–66) and brother Su Ch’e (1039–1112), focused much of his attention on literature and culture (*wen*), which embodied their classical heritage; but while looking to the ancients for inspiration, they argued for the importance of individual judgment in making moral and political decisions, and that judgment had to be based upon the unique circumstances of the day.

Yet another group determined to reinterpret the Classics were those scholars who were concerned with understanding the natural order of the universe and whose interests therefore turned towards cosmology and metaphysics, though based in Confucian moral philosophy. The Five Masters of the Northern Sung, as these founding figures of Neo-Confucianism came to be known, were themselves a varied group. Chou Tun-i (1017–73) and Shao Yung (1011–77) were particularly concerned with cosmological systems, while Chang Tsai (1020–77) focused on the omnipresence of *ch’i* (material force or matter and energy). Most important – especially in terms of influence – was the learning of the brothers Ch’eng Hao (1032–85) and Ch’eng I (1033–1107). Although they had minor differences, they shared a concern for

¹⁰ Peter K. Bol, “*This culture of ours*”: *Intellectual transitions in T’ang and Sung China* (Stanford, 1992); Peter K. Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in history* (Cambridge, MA, 2008).

understanding the organizing patterns or principles (*li*) that together with *ch'i* informed all phenomena: morality and society as well as the natural world.

All of these intellectual currents survived into the Southern Sung but not with equal force. Bol notes that intellectuals in that period were more concerned with the ways "in which individual, communal, and local activities could be made to serve the common good" than with state-centered prescriptions for society. This helps to explain the emergence of Ch'eng Learning, as articulated and developed by Chu Hsi (1130–1200), which came to dominate the intellectual landscape of the Southern Sung. *Tao-hsiieh*, as this movement came to be called, had its rivals; as Bol notes, the Yung-chia statecraft school – so named because many of its proponents came from Yung-chia county in Wen-chou – focused upon history and the reform of political institutions, albeit in ways that differed from both Wang An-shih and Ssu-ma Kuang in their concern with strengthening local institutions and promoting private wealth, a concern that they shared with their *Tao-hsiieh* rivals.

That said, the evolution and rise of *Tao-hsiieh*, not simply as a philosophy but as a social and political movement, was the central development in Southern Sung Confucianism. It is the subject of Hoyt Tillman's chapter, which presents a complex history with many competing voices and ideas and certainly without a foreordained outcome. Thus rather than focus on a particular intellectual lineage – from the Ch'engs to Chu Hsi – as many past intellectual histories have done, Tillman casts a broader net, looking at the fellowship or community of *Tao-hsiieh* thinkers in the twelfth century, among whom Chu and his followers were just one part. Examining the fluid relationships and debates that were often political as well as philosophical, Tillman traces the history of the *Tao-hsiieh* movement through four periods that he identifies, from the contestations of the 1270s to the widespread acceptance of Chu's version of *Tao-hsiieh* in the 1230s.

ELITES AND THEIR OUTPUT

The nature and activities of Sung elites have been a central topic in much of the recent scholarship on Sung history, and are well represented in this volume. The role played by the examinations, discussed above, was of huge importance, but they would not have had the impact that they did have were it not for at least two other factors. One was the development of schools. Described by John W. Chaffee, government schools at the capital, in prefectures, and eventually in counties went from being rarities in the early Sung to an integrated educational network in the early twelfth century that moved students from country schools up through the Imperial University and for a time assumed most of the functions of the examinations. Although the Three Hall System

(*San-she fa*), as this network was known, did not outlast the Northern Sung, its impact was great, both in terms of the expansion of educational opportunity and as an institutional model that was copied, at least in part, in later ages. Despite the lack of a unified system of government schools in the Southern Sung, many continued to flourish, and to them were added large numbers of academies, *shu-yüan* and *ching-she* ("study lodges"), many of them associated with the *Tao-hsiieh* movement. The centrality of learning in politics, society, and culture that will be described below owed much to the unprecedented educational offerings of these schools.

The second factor was printing. According to Hymes, despite the T'ang origins of this revolutionary technology,¹¹ it was the combination of government sponsorship of printing projects and private printers making use of new commercial opportunities that over the course of the Sung created the world's first print culture. The spread of education and explosion of examination candidate numbers would not have happened without the availability of printed books, but the impact of printing went far beyond this. Among the many kinds of printed materials described by Hymes are political reports, printed handbills, pamphlets, posters, monk ordination certificates, paper money, and even palmable examination cheat books.

The spread of printing into more and more areas of Sung society reflected the remarkable role played by the written word. Charles Hartman remarks on the highly literate quality of Sung governance and the pre-eminence of paper documents. This is evident in the huge documentary collections of laws and institutional regulations published by both government offices and private printers, not to mention the great production of published collected works of individuals (*wen-chi*). In the same vein, Hilde De Weerd's study of elite informational networks demonstrates how political information – much of it theoretically secret – circulated through the Sung elite via court gazettes, letters, and privately published collections of documents that were subsequently employed by the government to supplement its own record keeping.¹²

Returning to the elites, the impact of the rewards promised by examination success, the spread of a print culture, and the wealth generated by economic – especially commercial – growth combined to generate a dramatic increase in the literati or *shih* population over the course of the dynasty. Hymes's calculation that 5–6 percent of adult males were engaged in examination preparation

¹¹ Hymes is drawing on Timothy H. Barrett, *The woman who discovered printing* (New Haven and London, 2008), which treats the development of printing in the T'ang.

¹² Hilde De Weerd, *Information, territory and networks: The crisis and maintenance of empire in Song China* (forthcoming). Mention should also be made of her *Competition over content: Negotiating standards for the civil service examinations in imperial China (1127–1279)* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), in which she analyzed Southern Sung publications that were specifically targeted to literati preparing for the examinations.

and/or taking in the thirteenth century is speculative and may be challenged by some, but it points to an incontestable fact: the literati population of the Southern Sung was far larger than that of the Northern Sung had been. Hymes has famously argued in his earlier work that the Southern Sung was characterized by a localist turn, whereby local elites whose marriage and social networks were far more local than those of the national elite of the Northern Sung had been.¹³ He revisits this issue in his chapter, describing the arguments both for and against it and suggesting areas of commonality for those on both sides of the argument. He also offers a different framework for understanding changes that were evident in the Southern Sung, proposing the coexistence of a “court-oriented culture” in which high officials structured not only their official activities but even their social lives and networks, and “*shih*-oriented culture” which involved *shih* of more humble status (officials and nonofficials) and was more locally focused in its activities. Whereas the former emphasized hierarchical relationships based upon official status and functions, the latter was more horizontal, stressing dyadic ties such as *shih* to *shih*, student to teacher, or in-law to in-law. Although these two cultures must have been mutually permeable – high officials all had friends and relatives whose accomplishments and social worlds were more restricted than theirs – the idea of a *shih*-oriented culture has the potential to move the discussion of Southern Sung society in new directions.

The role of elite women also receives attention in Hymes’s chapter. The field of Sung women’s history has moved well beyond the old portrayal of footbinding and the spread of Neo-Confucianism resulting in a dramatic decline in their status. Hymes draws on the work of Patricia Ebrey and Bettine Birge, who have demonstrated that Sung elite women often married with large dowries (as a form of inheritance that the bride continued to control after her marriage) and exercised considerable power and agency as a result. He also notes the evidence compiled by Beverly Bossler attesting to the growth in literacy among elite females and to the emergence of letter writing among them. This was partly the result of the increasing presence of books and writing in society, but it also related to the role of women as the teachers

¹³ Robert P. Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen: The elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung* (Cambridge, 1986). Hymes’s argument for a localist turn in the Southern Sung was in part a response to a debate which had been initiated by Edward Kracke, who in his studies of Southern Sung examination lists had argued that Sung society was characterized by high levels of upward social mobility created by examination success, a position that both Hymes and Robert Hartwell challenged by asserting that the local elites of the Southern Sung were relatively closed groups that maintained their positions through wealth and marriage ties. Although the question of social mobility was debated vigorously, especially in the 1980s, in recent years the focus of social historians has been more on understanding the nature of local elites – what Hymes calls the *shih*-stratum – in all of its complexity, rather than on social mobility as such.

of children, male and female. Hymes also makes the interesting argument that the decreased importance of pedigree versus such factors as academic achievement and wealth in the Sung, compared with the T'ang, resulted in increasing status for grooms, which pressured the brides' families to increase their dowries. But those dowries, in turn, led to greater power and autonomy for the brides, which resulted in not only new social realities but also a conservative reaction in the form of the spread of footbinding and Neo-Confucian thinkers preaching widow chastity and female submission generally.

A RELIGIOUS SOCIETY

The role of religion in Sung society is another instance in which earlier generalizations have been widely discredited by recent scholarship. That the Sung was marked by the decline of Buddhism (excepting the Ch'an school) to be replaced by a largely secular Neo-Confucianism has been challenged by a number of religious and social historians who have documented the vitality and popularity of Buddhist, Taoist, and especially folk religious sects that flourished during the Sung.¹⁴ Although these vast and important topics would have benefited from separate chapters, Hymes provides a detailed portrait of a society and culture permeated by religious activity. At the highest levels the court and central government lavishly if unevenly supported Buddhist and Taoist establishments as well as shrines to local deities and worthies.¹⁵ But even more important was what Hymes calls the laicization of religion, the growing and often dominant role played by lay devotees and practitioners, both literati and nonelite individuals. Lay devotees of both established and popular religious societies and establishments served the process whereby religion permeated all parts of daily life. Hymes writes of "the large and varied flow of beliefs, rites, texts, and artifacts that the laity lived among and chose from," and points, too, to the role played by money and commerce. The latter included both the sale of ordination certificates – a Southern Sung phenomenon that served to blur the distinction between clergy and laity since the government essentially abdicated any role in assuring the quality of monks – and the plethora of religious objects and rituals that could be had for a price.

¹⁴ Among the most important of these are Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz Jr., eds., *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu, 1999); Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter Gregory, eds., *Religion and society in T'ang and Sung China* (Honolulu, 1993); Chikusa Masaaki, *Chūgoku Bukkyō shakaishi kenkyū* (Kyōto, 1982); Valerie Hansen, *Changing gods in medieval China, 1127–1276* (Princeton, 1990); Edward L. Davis, *Society and the supernatural in Song China* (Honolulu, 2001); and Robert P. Hymes, *Way and byway: Taoism, local religion, and models of divinity in Sung and modern China* (Berkeley, 2002).

¹⁵ In contrast to the government's relatively consistent support of Buddhist monasteries, its patronage of Taoism came primarily in the 1010s under Chen-tsung (r. 997–1022) following the "discovery" of the Heavenly Books and in the early twelfth century under Hui-tsung.

And what of the developments of Neo-Confucianism that were discussed earlier? Did its adherents participate in what Hymes calls the religious marketplace? His answer is an emphatic yes; he suggests that the Learning of the Way adherents, in particular, can be viewed as religious reformers, trying to purify customs and bring about some uniformity to rituals and morality. He further argues that what some have interpreted as the borrowing by Neo-Confucians of Buddhist ideas and practices should be understood in the context of their rivalry with Buddhists (especially Ch'an) for literati followers. This focus on competition and the marketplace is not meant to belittle the philosophical and ethical visions of the Neo-Confucian thinkers, or of their non-Confucian counterparts, but rather to make us mindful of the broader culture in which they were living.

THE SUNG IN CHINESE HISTORY

Recent years have witnessed a lively debate among Chinese historians around the world concerning the contours of Chinese history over the past thousand-plus years. Much of the discussion has concerned the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, whether they were later imperial or early modern, how they should be periodized, and their relation to the modern China of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But the role of the Sung has also received considerable attention, with much discussion focusing on whether it began a long modern age, *à la* Naitō, or was separated from the late imperial period by a fundamental divide, whenever that may have been. My purpose is not to reproduce the historiographical debate, which has been treated admirably by others,¹⁶ but rather to reflect upon the place of the Sung in the broader narratives of Chinese history as suggested by the chapters in this volume, and I would caution that the authors do not speak with one voice, for the period itself belies any simple generalizations.

To begin with Naitō, mentioned earlier and invoked by both Hartman and Hymes, it is noteworthy that for all of the debate about many aspects of his theory, his contention that the late T'ang witnessed a fundamental socio-economic transformation (the T'ang–Sung transition) has achieved a remarkable scholarly consensus. By contrast, his argument that the Sung initiated an age of autocracy has been much debated, at least in part because the dynasty was characterized more by powerful chief councilors than by autocratic emperors, and in fact the rise of true autocracy – or despotism – occurred only in the early Ming when chief councilors were abolished, thereby fundamentally altering the nature of imperial governance.

¹⁶ See especially von Glahn, "Imagining pre-modern China."

There is a case to be made for major continuities from the Sung through Ch'ing. These include the development of a culture of learning based upon the political centrality of examinations and the existence of government schools and academies throughout the empire; the related spread of printing; the emergence of local elites and local institutions associated with them such as lineage organizations; the role of the Chiang-nan region as the economic heartland of the empire; the pervasive influence of Sung Neo-Confucian thought; the flourishing of popular religious movements (Buddhist, Taoist, and syncretic), aided in considerable part by the spread of printing; and the practice of landownership, land taxes, and unregulated markets. Clearly the late imperial period owed much to the Sung. Yet if one digs just a bit, important qualifications arise in virtually all of these cases. To give some examples, the Ming and Ch'ing use of government schools to house the examination licentiates (*sheng-yüan*) changed their character profoundly from what they had been in the Sung and Yüan. While the lineage organization was a Sung creation, its ubiquitous presence in later times (especially in south China) shaped local societies in ways that were little known in the Sung. And while the Confucian orthodoxy in the Ming and Ch'ing was explicitly based on the Sung Neo-Confucianism, specifically the writings of Chu Hsi, the intellectual and cultural landscape in which it operated was very different; witness the uses to which Neo-Confucian writings on women were put to justify their subordination in ways that had not existed during the Sung.

In contrast to these underlying continuities is the evidence for disjuncture between the Sung and the late imperial period. One periodization that is especially popular among Ch'ing historians posits a break sometime in the early to mid-Ming separating a Sung-Yüan-early Ming period from another of the late Ming and Ch'ing.¹⁷ This frankly works better for the later period, since the earlier periodization not only ignores the T'ang-Sung transformation, but also lumps together the flourishing Sung economy with the economic and demographic nadir of the late fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. The nature and timing of the ensuing decline is a matter of some debate; one might posit a lengthy decline beginning in the thirteenth century, as suggested by McDermott and Shiba, that accelerated with the wars and natural disasters of the late Yüan, though I would note Paul Smith's argument that the notion of a general decline in the Yüan is belied by the continued vitality of Chiang-nan.¹⁸ Although China's maritime age continued through the Yüan

¹⁷ Von Glahn, "Imagining pre-modern China," pp. 54-5.

¹⁸ Paul Jakob Smith, "Introduction: Problematising the Song-Yuan-Ming transition," in *The Sung-Yüan-Ming Transition in Chinese history*, ed. Paul Jakob Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, MA, 2003), especially pp. 11-19.

(and clearly ended in the early Ming), the more extractive Mongol trade processes, as epitomized by their reliance on the monopolistic *ortaq*, contrasted with the regulated but essentially free trade of the Sung.

In contrast to the long-term nature of socioeconomic change, the rise of the Mongols created a sharply delineated geopolitical change of great consequence. It marked the end of a multipolar world that had existed since the late eighth century. However one evaluates the failings of the Sung military – and it is noteworthy that its development of gunpowder can be counted among the important continuities – it was the Mongol conquest that brought an end to that world.¹⁹ Although they are beyond the scope of this essay or volume, the alien dynasties – the Liao and Chin as well as the Yüan – had a lasting impact in many aspects of the military, politics, and culture, in many cases increasing the divide between the Sung and what followed.²⁰ The Yüan also witnessed an unprecedented movement of people, products, and information between China and the rest of Eurasia.²¹ The Mongols also put an end to the Sung fiscal order, with its remarkable reliance on commercial taxes. It is not clear if the culture of commerce, so vividly described by Hymes, quickly followed suit, but by the early Ming it seems to have disappeared.

In summary, the role of the Sung in Chinese imperial history belies any simple generalizations. I would suggest that it be likened to a multifaceted prism eliciting diverse images depending on what is being viewed. The combination of its comprehensive legacy of institutions, thought, and social practice, together with the many things that ceased after the Sung or, in some cases after the Yüan or early Ming, helps to account for the fascination that it has held for modern historians even in the face of longstanding views of it as a weak and therefore uninteresting period.

¹⁹ For a fuller treatment of this theme, see John W. Chaffee, "Song China and the multi-state and commercial world of East Asia," *Crossroads: Studies on the History of Exchange Relations in the East Asian World* 1–2 (2010), pp. 33–54.

²⁰ See the essays in Denis C. Twitchett and Herbert Franke, eds., *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 6: *Alien regimes and border states*, 710–1368 (Cambridge, 1994).

²¹ See the essays in Morris Rossabi, ed., *Eurasian influences on Yuan China* (Singapore, 2013).

CHAPTER 1

SUNG GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Charles Hartman

INTRODUCTION

The Sung dynasty (960–1279) marked a key transition in the long course of Chinese history. The first hundred years of Sung rule witnessed fundamental economic and social changes that transformed the lives of all elements in society, from emperor to peasant. Yet the same period that brought these sweeping changes also marked a high point in Chinese intellectual and cultural life. Sung scholarship, art, and technology are among the glories of Chinese civilization and have prompted some scholars to compare the eleventh century in China to the Renaissance in Europe. The comparison, however tenuous it becomes under scrutiny, well underscores this general spirit of innovation and creativity that is a hallmark of Sung civilization. Understanding this apparent paradox – how rapid social change coexisted with the stability necessary for lasting cultural achievement – is key to understanding the Sung. Much Sung discourse contains an acute tension that arises from a distinctive and willful joining of opposites: old and new, practical and theoretical, strength and delicacy. The vigorous lines and refined fragility of Sung white porcelain find a parallel in the reflections of the great eleventh-century political thinkers who wrote and struggled to transform a world they feared could shatter at any moment.

A Japanese journalist turned academic, Naitō Torajirō (1866–1934), formulated a theoretical model that posits and attempts to explain this transitional character of the Sung period. Although modern scholars no longer accept key elements of Naitō's thesis, the "Naitō hypothesis" has framed academic research on Sung history, especially in Japan and the United States, for much of the past century. According to Naitō, the Sung marked the transition in China from a "medieval" to a "modern" society, modern in the sense that Naitō believed that major elements of the Chinese society he knew – the late Ch'ing (1644–1912) – had originated in the Sung.

According to Naitō and his successors, the Sung unification of China after the political fragmentation of the late T'ang (618–907) and Five Dynasties (907–60) unleashed pent-up economic forces that rapidly transformed Chinese society in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Agricultural advances in both the growing and commercialization of rice and tea generated a drastic increase in trade and an expansion of copper- and silver-based currency. These changes brought new wealth to the countryside and an increased population, especially in the south. This produced both a rise in the independent status of commoners, who had been virtual “slaves” under earlier dynasties, and a new class of official and bureaucratic elite. This latter group, ancestor of the later “gentry” of Ming and Ch'ing times, formed the base of a new ruling elite that displaced both the older hereditary “aristocracy” of Six Dynasties (222–589) and T'ang and the nonaristocratic military families who had ruled during the ninth and tenth centuries.

Naitō also believed these changes brought an increase in status and power to the emperor and so resulted in the “monarchical dictatorship” characteristic of late imperial – that is, “modern” – China. In “medieval” times, the emperor’s social status was on par with, or even sometimes inferior to, that of the “aristocracy” with whom he shared power and through whom he ruled. Although certainly more than a figurehead, the emperor ruled in consort with them and could not act against their interests. But the rise of militarism and the decline of aristocracy in the Late T'ang and Five Dynasties removed this relationship between the emperor and his top officials. The early Sung emperors, themselves soldiers, seized this opportunity to redefine the role and enhance the power of the sovereign. Distrustful of their own military peers, they revised the old T'ang examination system and used it to recruit *shih ta-fu* (literally “servicemen and grand masters”), essentially a new civil service, from among the emergent commoners and nouveau riche. The emperor’s social status was now far above that of his officials. He assumed “dictatorial” powers because only the sovereign, through the examination system, now controlled access to office. This new centralized bureaucracy of Sung was more beholden to the throne and so supported imperial power in a different manner and on a greater scale than had its medieval forebears.¹

¹ For a useful summary of Naitō Konan’s ideas, see Miyakawa Hisayuki, “An outline of the Naitō hypothesis and its effects on Japanese studies of China,” *Far Eastern Quarterly* 14 No. 4 (August 1955), pp. 533–52, esp. 537–41. European notions of “ancient,” “medieval,” and “modern,” as well as the contemporary political situation in China and Japan, influenced Naitō’s work. See Joshua A. Fogel, *Politics and sinology: The case of Naitō Konan (1866–1934)* (Cambridge, MA, 1984), pp. 168–210. For the classic, modern articulation and refinement of Naitō’s theory, see Robert M. Hartwell, “Demographic, political, and social transformations of China, 750–1550,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42 No. 2 (December 1982), pp. 365–442.

The great virtue of Naitō's synthesis was to focus attention on the rise of the centralized bureaucracy in the early Sung, on the importance of the civil service examinations in the process of its formation, and on the vast social and cultural divide that separated the T'ang ruling class from that of Sung. Modern research on Sung government and politics has lavished attention on Sung officialdom, its composition, its education, its ethos, and on the institutional structures that supported it. However, Naitō's journalistic exposure to the corrupt monarchy of late nineteenth-century China certainly influenced his concept of "monarchical dictatorship," and many scholars of Sung history now question how well the notion of imperial autocracy describes the Sung rulers. Recent research on the interaction between the Sung monarchs and their officials suggests a more nuanced and balanced relationship than the concept of either dictatorship or autocracy entails. The Sung monarchs were indeed different from their T'ang predecessors, but they were just as different again from their clearly more authoritarian successors in Ming and Ch'ing.²

The lasting legacy of Sung rule was the creation of the "modern" notion that China is one place, one country, and the formation of the institutional mechanisms necessary to sustain that notion. During the tenth century, the period of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (902–79), centrifugal tendencies that had accumulated since the An Lu-shan (703–57) rebellion in 755 almost split China into multinational states, similar to Europe after the Roman Empire (27 BC–AD 395). There were ample historical and theoretical models for a Chinese multinationalism – the Warring States (476–221 BC), the Three Kingdoms (220–80), the Six Dynasties. Furthermore, the existence of non-Chinese "alien and border states" such as the Khitan Liao dynasty (907–1125) and their control over Chinese-speaking populations in the north and west initially created another dynamic toward acceptance of multinational states.

The advent of Sung put a halt to the realization of such "splittist" tendencies forever. China remains to this day a country of stark regional divisions, but the modern, and still delicate, balance between center and province is a legacy of Sung. Abandoning exclusive reliance on either the hereditary houses or the military, the early Sung monarchs created a polity that drew cultural regions and social groups together. Sung officials often write with a firm sense that they share in the health of the body politic. In truth, the Sung monarchs fostered *shih ta-fu* government as a means to strengthen their own control over the country's burgeoning wealth. Yet despite the questionable integrity

² For an overview of recent trends in Japanese Sung studies, see Ihara Hiroshi et al., "Bibliography of Song history studies in Japan (1982–2000)," *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies* 31 (2001), pp. 157–313, esp. 158–69, and continuations in 32 (2002), pp. 127–46; 33 (2003), pp. 225–50; 34 (2004), pp. 109–57; 35 (2005), pp. 129–70; 36 (2006), pp. 133–87; 37 (2007), pp. 173–211; 38 (2008), pp. 203–58; 39 (2009), pp. 141–71.

of the imperial motive, the centralized bureaucracy they created was a powerful force that spread a common political education, culture, and ethic across the disparate regions of China. Never again would regionalism gain enough traction to outpace centralism as a major organizational force in the Chinese mentality – the “new” empire was here to stay.³

And that new empire was among the most entrepreneurial in Chinese history. When the *shih ta-fu* emerged as the ruling class, they used their power – with the support of the Sung emperors – to accumulate large landed estates and to seize control of commercial activity. The estates transformed medieval patterns of land tenure and underlay the economic foundations of Sung officialdom.⁴ The rapid expansion of the population into south China, technological innovations in agriculture, and the growth of a nationwide trade network made these lands more productive and valuable.⁵ At the same time, the coastal cities of the east and southeast emerged for the first time in Chinese history as major centers of shipbuilding and international trade.⁶ The rapid urbanization and growth of commercial enterprises provided many opportunities for the Sung state to exercise its entrepreneurial ingenuity.⁷ Early in the dynasty, over 2,000 tax collection centers were established in rural market towns and fairs to collect a sales tax of 3 percent and a transport tax of 2 percent on the retail price of merchandise. Revenues from this source increased five-fold by the middle of the eleventh century.⁸ The state itself was also the largest landlord. By 1077, half the total commercial tax revenues collected in the capital city of K'ai-feng came from rental income on state-owned property.⁹ The government and its agents seldom missed an economic opportunity. For example, commercial activity in K'ai-feng grew so rapidly in the eleventh century that shops and retail outlets expanded and encroached onto public streets.

³ Many scholars trace the beginnings of Chinese nationalism to the Sung. See Rolf Trauzettel, “Sung patriotism as a first step toward Chinese nationalism,” in *Crisis and prosperity in Sung China*, ed. John Winthrop Haeger (Tucson, 1975), pp. 199–213.

⁴ Denis C. Twitchett, *Land tenure and the social order in T'ang and Sung China* (London, 1962), pp. 26–32.

⁵ Ping-ti Ho, “Early-ripening rice in Chinese history,” *Economic History Review*, new series 9 No. 2 (1956), pp. 200–18; Shiba Yoshinobu, “Commercialization of farm products in the Sung period,” *Acta Asiatica* 19 (1970), pp. 77–96.

⁶ Shiba Yoshinobu, “Sung foreign trade: Its scope and organization,” in *China among equals: The Middle Kingdom and its neighbors, 1016–1418 centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 89–115.

⁷ For an excellent study, see Laurence J. C. Ma, *Commercial development and urban change in Sung China* (Ann Arbor, 1971); and the classic Shiba Yoshinobu, *Commerce and society in Sung China*, trans. Mark Elvin (Ann Arbor, 1970).

⁸ Ma, *Commercial development and urban change in Sung China*, p. 66; Chu Jui-hsi, “Sung-tai shang-jen te she-hui ti-wei chi ch'i li-shih tso-yung,” *Li-shih yen-chiu* No. 2 (1986), p. 129.

⁹ Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of aristocrats and bureaucrats: The development of medieval Chinese cityscapes* (Honolulu, 1999), p. 113 n. 27. This work contains a solidly researched and fascinating portrait of economic and social change in Sung K'ai-feng and Hang-chou.

After years of trying to stem the trend, the state finally acquiesced and levied in 1086 a new "street encroachment tax" (*ch'in-chieh ch'ien*) on offenders not only in the capital but over the entire country.¹⁰

A few economic numbers may help to visualize the rapid growth of the centralized Sung state and render a feel for the efficiency of its operation. Between the last decade of the tenth century and the first decade of the eleventh, annual revenues of the Sung government doubled, and its yearly budgets moved from deficit to surplus financing. Top advisers to Emperor Chen-tsung (r. 997–1022) acted between 1006 and 1017 to create a centralized finance system that defined and protected the emperor's personal share of this wealth, both intertwining and demarcating the line between state and imperial moneys. The emperor's personal income, based on decennial averages, nearly doubled between the second and the third decade of the eleventh century. These increases reflect not only overall growth in the economy but also the efficiency of Sung government – and the Sung monarch – in extracting a significant portion of national wealth. As early as the 980s, over half of the emperor's income derived from government monopoly sales of import goods, tea, and salt.¹¹ This entrepreneurial spirit – the close intertwining of government, business, and emperor that manifested itself a hundred years later in the fiscal aggrandizement of Emperor Shen-tsung (r. 1067–85) and Wang An-shih (1021–86) – was present in Sung government from the start.

Contrary to what might be expected, the numbers involved were much larger than for later periods in Chinese history. A comparison of government revenue for two years, 1064 and 1578, reveals that, although revenue from agricultural sources was virtually identical, revenue from nonagricultural sectors under the Sung was an astounding nine times greater than under the Ming (1368–1644).¹² It would also appear that Sung government succeeded in appropriating a comparatively large portion of national income. Sung writers, especially in the Southern Sung (1127–1279), often mention the oppressive tax burden on the population and claim that never in history had a government extracted more in taxes from its people.¹³ Modern estimates confirm these claims. During the Ming–Ch'ing period, Chinese government collected between 6 and 8 percent of national income as taxes. Nineteenth-century

¹⁰ Heng, *Cities of aristocrats and bureaucrats*, p. 107.

¹¹ Robert M. Hartwell, "The imperial treasuries: Finance and power in Song China," *Bulletin of Sung–Yüan Studies* 20 (1988), esp. pp. 24–8, 37, 62.

¹² Winston Wan Lo, *An introduction to the civil service of Sung China: With emphasis on its personnel administration* (Honolulu, 1987), pp. 8–10. Furthermore, these gross statistics do not take into account the smaller geographical area and population of Sung versus Ming China. For a detailed study of the size of the Sung versus the Ming economy, see Liu Kuang-lin, "Wrestling for power: The state and the economy in later imperial China, 1000–1770" (diss., Harvard University, 2005).

¹³ See, for example, Yeh Shih, *Yeh Shih chi*, ed. Liu Kung-ch'ün et al. (Peking, 1961), p. 773.

European states collected from 4 to 6 percent. Estimates for the Sung rely on more tenuous data, but nevertheless range from a low of 13 percent to an astounding 24 percent.¹⁴ By the middle of the twelfth century, overpopulation, incessant taxation, and continual militarization for border defense put severe strains on the former economic prosperity of Northern Sung (960–1127).¹⁵ But, that any state could extract such a burden from its population without generating substantial resistance demonstrates both its organizational efficiency and a general consensus on its goals and objectives between governors and governed.

A BIBLIOGRAPHIC PRELUDE

It may be useful to preface the ensuing description of Sung government with a few cautionary remarks on surviving sources and how they affect research on Sung institutional history. This chapter relies as much as possible on primary sources. Yet there are problems. The Sung was among the most document-driven of all Chinese states and compiled its own history from the plethora of bureaucratic records generated during the course of routine administration. But few of these records survive in their primary form. The present *Sung hui-yao chi-kao* (*A draft compendium of Sung documents*), the largest collection of such material, was compiled only in the nineteenth century by copying texts from the *Yung-lo ta-tien* (*Yung-lo encyclopedia*), itself a large compendium completed under the Ming dynasty in 1408.¹⁶ Documents in the *Compendium* have thus been extensively edited, copied, abridged, and recopied. The *Compendium* preserves a large number of primary texts, but these often survive only in truncated and battered condition. They should be used wherever possible in tandem with related texts from other sources.

Two surviving works also derive in a rather direct way from primary records compiled by official Sung historians, and, together with the *Compendium of Sung*

¹⁴ Peter J. Golas, "The Sung economy: How big?", *Bulletin of Sung-Yüan Studies* 20 (1988), pp. 90–4.

¹⁵ Paul Jakov Smith, "Do we know as much as we need to about the Song economy? Observations on the economic crisis of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 24 (1994), pp. 327–33.

¹⁶ Hsü Sung, comp., *Sung hui-yao chi-kao* (1936; Peking, 1966) (hereafter *SHY* (1966)). The *Compendium* remains in manuscript. Its first 1936 printing and all subsequent reprintings are photographic reproductions of Hsü Sung's original manuscript. There are several secondary studies that provide guides to the *Compendium* and attempt to reorder its material and reconstruct its original format. These are Ch'en Chih-ch'ao, *Chieh-k'ai "Sung hui-yao" chih mi* (Peking, 1995); and the studies collected in Wang Yün-hai, *Wang Yün-hai wen chi* (K'ai-feng, 2006). See also Wang Tseng-yü, "The *Yung-lo collectanea* as a source of materials for the study of Sung history," *Gest Library Journal* 4 No. 2 (Winter 1991), pp. 91–9. The Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica (Chung-yang yen-chiu-yüan Li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so), Taiwan, has prepared an edited, digital, and searchable version of the *Compendium* accessible at major research libraries via the Institute's website.

documents, constitute the core sources for research on Sung political and institutional history. The *Hsü tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien* (*Long draft continuation of the comprehensive mirror that aids administration*) by Li T'ao (1115–84), completed in 1183, was originally a draft chronological history of the Northern Sung from 960 through 1127.¹⁷ The *Chien-yen i-lai hsi-nien yao-lu* (*Chronological record of important events since 1127*) by Li Hsin-ch'uan (1167–1244), completed about 1208, was a chronological history of the early Southern Sung from 1127 through 1163.¹⁸ Both works are masterpieces in the great tradition of Chinese history writing. Li T'ao and Li Hsin-ch'uan both served as official court historians with access to official resources and archives. Yet both designed and wrote their histories as correctives to the official record, during periods of service outside the court. In other words, both historians were keenly aware that the ebb and flow of political events had already influenced and distorted the dynasty's primary historical record.

Furthermore, neither of these works, so central to the study of Sung history, has survived intact to modern times. As in the case of the *Compendium of Sung documents*, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scholars culled quotations from the *Yung-lo encyclopedia* to re-create the present texts of the *Long draft* and the *Chronological record*. Somewhere in this process, probably in the late twelfth or thirteenth century, major portions of Li T'ao's *Long draft* went missing and the *Chronological record* was disfigured with a spurious commentary that sometimes distorts its original intentions. The pattern of the lacunae in the *Long draft* is highly suspicious. Missing are the years 1067–70, 1093–7, and 1100–27, in other words, those years that saw the rise of Wang An-shih and his implementation of the New Policies (*Hsin-fa*), plus most of those years, including the entire reign of Emperor Hui-tsung (r. 1100–26), when Wang's successors were in power. These lacunae, plus the tone of the added commentary in the *Chronological record*, suggest that adherents of *Tao-hsüeh* (Learning of the Way) tampered with the texts of both works. *Tao-hsüeh*, a late Sung intellectual movement, opposed Wang An-shih and formulated a view of Sung history that blamed Wang, his policies, and his successors for the fall of Northern Sung in 1127 and for many ills in Southern Sung as well.¹⁹

The surviving historical record of once primary Sung documents thus ranges from adequate to ample for the beginning and middle portions of both

¹⁷ Li T'ao, *Hsü-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien* (1183; 34 vols., Peking, 1979–1995, and 20 vols., Peking, 2004) (hereafter *HCP* (1979)).

¹⁸ Li Hsin-ch'uan, *Chien-yen i-lai hsi-nien yao-lu* (1208; Peking, 1988) (hereafter *Yao-lu* (1988)).

¹⁹ On these issues, see Charles Hartman, "The making of a villain: Ch'in Kuei and Tao-hsüeh," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 58 No. 1 (June 1998), pp. 59–146, esp. 68–86; also Charles Hartman, "Li Hsin-ch'uan and the historical image of late Sung *Tao-hsüeh*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 61 No. 2 (December 2001), pp. 317–58.

the Northern and Southern Sung, but from meager to nonexistent for the conclusions of both periods. The problem is particularly acute for the period from 1224 through the end of the dynasty, since the official historians were still processing raw data from this period when Lin-an (Hang-chou) fell in 1276. This uneven distribution in the documentary base has shaped and colored research on the Sung. It encourages synchronic studies on periods for which sources are rich, and frustrates such studies for the other periods. At the same time, this shifting depth in the database hampers the design of diachronic studies of institutions across the broad spectrum of the entire dynasty. One needs therefore to support official documents with as many private sources as possible and always pay special heed to matters of provenance and textual integrity.

The teleological arrangement of many Southern Sung collections of primary sources is another problem related to the rise of *Tao-hsiieh* in the late Sung. Modern descriptions of Sung government often rely heavily on material from Southern Sung encyclopedias. Although these works contain valuable primary sources, their selection, editing, and arrangement often follow a *Tao-hsiieh* agenda and push a distinctive vision of Northern Sung history.²⁰ They should be used with caution and always in conjunction with other sources of primary documentation. A major exception is the *Yü-hai* (*Jade sea*), compiled by Wang Ying-lin (1223–96), the last of the great Sung scholars, a work largely free of overt *Tao-hsiieh* influence.²¹

Another problem is institutional change. Traditional sources, such as the monograph chapters on government institutions in the official *Sung-shih* (*Sung history*) of 1345, begin their accounts with a general description of an individual agency or position, then follow with a chronological record of mandated changes.²² But these descriptions are often bureaucratic reworkings of original edicts and orders that prescribed how things should be. The descriptions are generalized and abstract, and rarely describe actual practice. The ensuing changes may or may not have taken effect; there is seldom indication when or if a given modification ended or was itself changed yet again. The Western pioneer of research on medieval Chinese institutional history, Robert des Rotours, worked over twenty years meticulously to translate the chapters on

²⁰ See Hilde De Weerdt, "Aspects of Song intellectual life: A preliminary inquiry into some Southern Sung encyclopedias," *Papers on Chinese History* 3 (Spring 1994), pp. 1–27; also Hilde De Weerdt, *Competition over content: Negotiating standards for the civil service examinations in imperial China (1127–1279)* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), pp. 270–97.

²¹ Wang Ying-lin, *Yü-hai* (1883 ed.; Shanghai, 1988) (hereafter *Yü-hai* (1988)). For a detailed biography, see Charles Bradford Langley, "Wang Yinglin (1223–1296): A study in the political and intellectual history of the demise of Song" (diss., Indiana University, 1980).

²² Togto (T'o-t'o) et al., eds., *Sung-shih* (1345; Peking, 1977) (hereafter *SS* (1977)) 161–72, pp. 3767–4154. This material in the *Sung history* should always be consulted together with the meticulous textual study by Kung Yen-ming, *Sung-shih chib-kuan-chih pu-cheng* (Hang-chou, 1991; Peking, 2009).

government institutions from the *Hsin T'ang-shu* (*New T'ang history*), only at the end of his career to realize and acknowledge the highly theoretical and prescriptive nature of his text.²³ An account of Sung government based solely on such official sources and their later derivatives would be valid for no actual time and place, because these sources describe an ideal, not a living thing.

A related problem is the constantly evolving, changing, and ad hoc nature of Sung government. Institutional historians of other periods in Chinese history may look upon the Sung as a hopeless muddle of overlapping agencies, jurisdictions, and titles; and they often portray Sung government from the vantage points of earlier or later dynasties. I have in the ensuing pages tried to present an image of Sung political institutions that is both general enough to offer a coherent overview, yet detailed enough to provide a concrete sense of the historical volatility of those institutions. Modern scholars of Sung divide the dynasty into three broad periods: (1) early Sung through 1082, (2) a period of "innovation" that began with the Yüan-feng reforms of 1080-2 and ended with the fall of Northern Sung in 1127, and (3) the Southern Sung. This gross periodization conveys little sense of the vibrant, fluid nature of Sung political life, yet does underscore the importance of the Yüan-feng reforms, a vital turning point in the history of Sung institutions.

Yet the reader should be forewarned: virtually every general statement in the following pages can, upon further examination, be modified in some way. For example, Sung officials wore purple, scarlet, and green robes. Well, yes, after 1082. Before 1082, they wore purple, scarlet, green, and blue robes. Sung political institutions, like all human creations, were in a constant state of flux. The detailed exposition of the evolution of these institutions, utilizing the full range of available sources, would be a gargantuan undertaking and has yet to be attempted, even by Chinese scholars.²⁴ With these caveats in mind this description of Sung government and politics begins.

THE UNFINISHED CHARACTER OF THE SUNG STATE

In at least two ways, the Sung began differently than other major dynasties in Chinese history. First, when Chao K'uang-yin (T'ai-tsu, 927-76, r. 960-76), a palace guard commander in the service of the Later Chou (951-60),

²³ Robert des Rotours, *Traité des fonctionnaires et Traité de l'armée: Traduits de la nouvelle histoire des T'ang* (chap. XLVI-L), 2 vols. (Leiden, 1947); Robert des Rotours, "Le T'ang lieou tien: Décrit-il exactement les institutions en usage sous la dynastie des T'ang?" *Journal asiatique* 263 (1975), pp. 183-201.

²⁴ A good beginning, however, is Kung Yen-ming, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien* (Peking, 1997-2008). Much more than a "dictionary," this work attempts a systematic, if limited, description of the historical changes to Sung institutions.

usurped power in 960, he began his dynasty not with a great conquest or an epic struggle against oppression but with a furtive palace coup against a seven-year-old child emperor. This inauspicious beginning haunted his image-conscious successors. Almost ninety years later, an angry Emperor Jen-tsung (r. 1022–63) dismissed an official whose mere poetic allusion to these events Jen-tsung construed as slander of the founding ancestor.²⁵ So the Sung began more as a whimper than as a grand event, and there was little in 960 to suggest that the latest military coup would produce anything more than a sixth in the string of five short-lived dynasties that had followed the T'ang.

Second, neither the Sung founders nor their successors ever completed the conquest of all the traditional Chinese lands listed in the *Shu-ching* (*Book of documents*) as part of the original Chinese polity. After repeated Sung efforts to recover these areas, the 1005 treaty of Shan-yüan finally acknowledged Khitan control over the so-called "sixteen prefectures," a large swath of territory south of the great wall that extended from Tatong in modern Shansi east through modern Peking to the coast.²⁶ Furthermore, the Tangut state of Western Hsia (1032–1227) in the northwest controlled the Ordos region within the bend of the Yellow River (*Huang-ho*) and the modern Kansu corridor. The Han (206 BC–AD 220) and the T'ang had firmly controlled all these areas. And after 1127 the Jurchen Chin dynasty (1115–1234) took control of all territory north of the Huai river (*Huai-ho*). Sung failure to re-exert Chinese control over these areas was a constant source of wounded pride and a driving force in domestic politics. For example, according to one source, Emperor Shen-tsung adopted the New Policies (*Hsin-fa*) to raise the money necessary for military conquest of the sixteen prefectures.²⁷

Although a series of treaties between Sung and its neighbors usually prevented overt hostilities, the north and northwest borders were always insecure and required the presence of large standing armies for defense. Unlike other dynasties that had relied on civilian militias conscripted from the peasant population, the Sung maintained paid professional armies. For most of the

²⁵ The official was Li Shu (1002–59) in 1048, see *HCP* (1979) 165, p. 3972, also Wei T'ai, *Tung-hsiian pi-lu*, ed. Li Yü-min (c. 1090; Peking, 1983) 3, pp. 31–2.

²⁶ For an overview of Sung history from the founding through the treaty of Shan-yüan, see Lau Nap-yin (Liu Li-yen) and Huang Kuan-chung, "Founding and consolidation of the Sung dynasty under T'ai-tsu (960–976), T'ai-tsung (976–997), and Chen-tsung (997–1022)," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 5, Part 1: *The Sung dynasty and its precursors, 907–1279*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge and New York, 2009), pp. 206–68. See the excellent map of the sixteen prefectures and Chinese–Khitan military engagements in the area between 936 and 1005 in Frederic W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900–1800* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), p. 108. For an exact geographical description of Chinese lands never brought under Sung control, see Michael Charles McGrath, "Military and regional administration in Northern Sung China (960–1126)" (diss., Princeton University, 1982), p. 11.

²⁷ Wang Chih, *Mo-chi*, ed. Chu Chieh-jen (Peking, 1981), p. 20.

Northern Sung, the state financed a standing army of 1 million soldiers, from a general population of 60 million people. Military expenses for pay, supply, and armaments regularly consumed 80 percent of the entire state budget.²⁸ Periods of open hostility, such as the Tangut wars in the 1040s, produced large government deficits and economic instability, and unleashed domestic pressures that roiled the political establishment.

The Sung was unlike the Han and the T'ang in yet another way. The Sung had no trial run. Short-lived yet strong dynasties (the Ch'in, 221–207 BC, and the Sui, AD 581–617) had preceded both the Han and the T'ang. These dynasties, although brief, had accomplished military consolidation and laid down institutional and administrative frameworks that their successors readily adapted. The Sung founders were not so fortunate. Tenth-century Sung government was a hopeless patchwork of late T'ang administrative structure and ad hoc provincial institutions inherited from the military governors of the Five Dynasties. These facts explain much of the tentative nature of early Sung political life. There was constant tension between the need to keep old political institutions functioning and, simultaneously, the need to develop new institutions better suited to changing times.

Traditional Chinese scholarship has focused on two catchphrases to explain the transformations the Sung founders brought to Chinese government, and these slogans still frame many studies on early Sung history, especially in China. The first, *ch'iang-kan jo-chih* (strengthen the trunk and weaken the branches), refers to early unification and centralization, the trunk being emperor and court, the branches being the provinces. The second, *chung-wen ch'ing-wu* (emphasize the civil and de-emphasize the military) refers to government by civil rather than military authority. Recent research suggests, however, that although the first was perhaps a conscious policy of T'ai-tsu (r. 960–76), the second did not begin until the reign of T'ai-tsung (r. 976–97), and that neither slogan, pushed to its extreme, describes the reality of early Sung.²⁹

The development of mature Northern Sung political and governmental structures was a gradual process, and, in many ways, a process that seems to have unfolded largely without a unified vision. T'ai-tsu centralized financial and military structures because there was no other way for him to integrate

²⁸ For a detailed discussion of Northern Sung military expenditures, see Wong Hon-chiu, "Government expenditures in Northern Sung China (960–1127)" (diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1975), pp. 1–61. Wang Sheng-to, *Liang Sung ts'ai-cheng shih* (Peking, 1995), pp. 771–3, collects eighteen estimates of military costs as a proportion of total government outlays. The estimates extend from 60 through 90 percent, with the majority being at 80 percent, and range in date from 1038 through 1234.

²⁹ Edmund Henry Worthy Jr., "The founding of Sung China, 950–1000: Integrative changes in military and political institutions" (diss., Princeton University, 1975), esp. pp. 295–311. Worthy's dissertation remains the best detailed study in English of the early Sung.

and govern his rapidly expanding empire. He was a superb soldier who turned out, in addition, to have had a genius for administrative organization. T'ai-tsung drastically increased official recruitment through civil service examinations because he needed a homogeneous, dependable workforce to staff the new empire. Perhaps also, like Empress Wu of T'ang (r. 684–705), who inaugurated the examinations to recruit officials loyal to her, T'ai-tsung saw the benefit of forming a pool of new officials loyal to him rather than to his older brother, with whom he had had a difficult relationship.

Later Sung sources often refer to *tsu-tsung chih fa* (the policies of the ancestors) as a homogeneous body of foundational principles and institutions laid down by the dynastic founders, T'ai-tsu and T'ai-tsung. In truth, many of the "policies of the ancestors" did not emerge until the end of Chen-tsung's or even the beginning of Jen-tsung's reign, roughly the period from 1015 through 1035.³⁰ For example, the beginnings of the Censorate (*Yü-shih t'ai*), an institution central to mature Sung government, did not emerge until the second decade of the eleventh century. Its division of labor with the Bureau of Policy Criticism (*Chien-yüan*) dates from 1017, but the two organs were probably not fully staffed until the early 1030s.³¹ Likewise, the Sung inherited a Directorate of Education (*Kuo-tzu chien*) from the Latter Chou, but this institution was not expanded and given its central role in the Sung educational system until 1044.³²

At the same time, many early institutions and procedures that became later fixtures of Sung government arose in an ad hoc manner, the result of individual boldness and quick initiative. And given the Chinese veneration for precedent, once a thing was done, it became much easier to do a second time. A good example is the late eleventh-century account of the first use of *chiao-huan* ("to surrender and return") power by the *chung-shu she-jen* (Secretariat drafter). In its mature Sung form, this practice empowered the drafter, a Secretariat official responsible for crafting polished versions of imperial edicts for promulgation, to return the emperor's draft if he thought the draft contained errors or improprieties. In the T'ang, this power had been confined to the *Chi-shih chung* (Supervising Secretary) in the Chancellery, and had never been exercised by a Secretariat official. In the early Sung, although the post of Supervising

³⁰ For an excellent study of this period and its importance, see Karl F. Olsson, "The structure of power under the third emperor of Sung China: The shifting balance after the peace of Shan-yuan" (diss., University of Chicago, 1974). For the "policies of the ancestors" see Teng Hsiao-nan, *Tsu-tsung chih fa: Pei-Sung ch'ien ch'i cheng-chih shu-lieh* (Peking, 2006); and Christian Lamouroux (Lan Keli) and Deng Xiaonan, "The 'Ancestors family instructions': Authority and sovereignty in medieval China," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 35 (2005), pp. 69–97.

³¹ *Yü-bai* (1988) 121, pp. 43a–45a; *HCP* (1979) 89, pp. 2040–1; *SHY* (1966) *chih-kuan* 3, p. 51a–b.

³² *Yü-bai* (1988) 112, pp. 24a–26b; Thomas H. C. Lee (Li Hung-ch'i), *Government education and examinations in Sung China* (New York and Hong Kong, 1985), pp. 55–103, esp. 58–9.

Secretary in the Chancellery survived, that official had long been stripped of his power to "return" imperial drafts.³³

In the late 1030s, Emperor Jen-tsung enfeoffed the wife of the nephew of the Dowager Empress Liu (969–1033) with a patent of nobility that afforded the woman, née Wang, a large salary and access to the palace. But her status was revoked when rumors circulated that she had been intimate with the emperor. After a short absence, however, she was once again seen within the palace. Protests from the Censorate to the throne on the matter were not returned. Soon thereafter the Secretariat received an imperial draft that reinstated her patent of nobility. Fu Pi (1004–83), then serving as Secretariat drafter, returned the emperor's draft, essentially refusing to promulgate the order of reinstatement. The emperor backed down, no doubt fearing that the more he pushed the issue the more his affair with the woman would become public. Fu Pi adroitly used this leverage to establish a precedent for the drafter's use of "return" power. He adapted a defunct T'ang procedure from the office of Supervising Secretary and boldly took advantage of the circumstances to extend that procedure to the office of Secretariat drafter, which he then occupied.³⁴

The mid-eleventh century, roughly the period from the end of the Tangut wars in 1045 through the ascension of Emperor Shen-tsung in 1068, marks one of the most innovative, creative, and imaginative in the entire history of Chinese political thought and institutions. Southern Sung historians looked back to this quarter-century as the dynasty's golden age. There is much to justify this view. First, by this period much of the institutional structure of Sung government was in place, but not so firmly in place that adaptation and change could not occur. Distinctive Sung institutions, like the Bureau of Policy Criticism and the drafter's "return" authority, had emerged yet not ossified. This fluid framework provided room both for theorizing about how government should work and for actual experimentation on real institutions.

Second, much of this period coincides with the reign of Emperor Jen-tsung, the first emperor born and raised after the advent of *shih ta-fu* government in the early eleventh century. Later historians agreed that Jen-tsung knew how to be an emperor, and his posthumous name, "the benevolent ancestor," speaks to qualities of openness and tolerance that contributed much to the spirit of the age. An important achievement of this period was an initial Sung dialogue on the proper relationship between sovereign and minister, between the emperor

³³ Des Rotours, *Traité des fonctionnaires et Traité de l'armée*, pp. 147–9; Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien*, p. 161.

³⁴ For the basic account, see Su Ch'e, *Lung-ch'uan pieh-chih*, ed. Yü Tsung-hsien (1099; Peking, 1982), p. 88; also *HCP* (1979) 133, p. 3174. Li T'ao accepts this incident as the beginning of "return" power in the Sung and places the events in the period 1034–7.

and his top advisers. Jen-tsung both allowed that dialogue to take place and took an active part in it, such that later continuations added little to the initial conversation. Third, there were just enough problems in this period to make devising solutions an urgent matter. The failed minor reforms and the budget deficits from the Tangut wars in the early 1040s forced an urgency on government thinkers and planners that earlier, more settled times had not provided.

Lastly, the *shih ta-fu* that T'ai-tsung first recruited through examinations into the civil service now formed a large and cohesive body of officials. Many *shih ta-fu* families had now produced two and three generations of officials. For the first time in Chinese history, large numbers of "literati" (*shih*) held posts high enough in the bureaucratic structure to actually effect policy. It is one of the great myths of Chinese history to describe the ruling elite as "Confucian literati." For much of Chinese history those closest to imperial power were neither Confucian nor literati. But in the Northern Sung, for the first, and probably for the last, time, men like Fu Pi, Ou-yang Hsiu (1007–72), Ssu-ma Kuang (1019–86), and Wang An-shih, all both Confucian and literati by anyone's definition, actually did play a significant role in ruling China. The tentative order they created quickly evaporated into divisive partisan feuding and authoritarian rule. But their brief moment was so attractive to later generations it gave rise to the myth that such people always had ruled, and the hope that they always could rule, China.

THE LITERATUS AS CIVIL SERVANT

A great scholar has written: "Confucianism in China is a relatively modern thing."³⁵ Jacques Gernet argues that the "Neo-Confucian revival" of the eleventh century was in fact more new than revival. For Gernet, the image of continuity in the Confucian tradition, extending from Confucius (551–479 BC) through the Northern Sung, is a chimera created by scholars who divorce the intellectual content of Confucianism from its surrounding historical context. In other words, we should take quite seriously the T'ang writer Han Yü (768–824) when he tells us that the Confucian tradition of this time was moribund in a society dominated by Buddhist and Taoist values and institutions. Han Yü's image of a Confucian-based civil service whose members would enjoy a modicum of real political power seemed, in theory and practice, a pipe dream to his eighth-century contemporaries. To Ou-yang Hsiu in the eleventh century, who discovered and rehabilitated the forgotten T'ang

³⁵ Jacques Gernet, "Le réforme confucéenne," in Jacques Gernet, *L'intelligence de la Chine: Le social et le mental* (Paris, 1994), pp. 80–7, 80.

author, Han Yü's vision seemed a lot like what Ou-yang Hsiu and his contemporaries were trying to create.³⁶ Before the Sung, there had been many Confucians in China, perhaps even among emperors and the powerful. Much of state ritual and many state institutions derived from theoretical models in the Confucian classic texts. But, as Han Yü insisted, the essence of Confucian teachings, as contained in the *Analects* (*Lun-yü*) and *Mencius* (*Meng-tzu*), is a code of personal morality and a conviction that government is the extension of that personal code to the public sphere. No government in China had ever attempted to create actual working institutions that, in both theory and practice, embodied the personal moral standards of Confucian teaching. The eleventh-century attempt to do precisely this was something new.

At this point, a word of clarification concerning terminology may be in order. The Jesuit missionaries adapted the Latin term *literati*, plural of the singular *literatus*, to designate in a general way the educated ruling elite of sixteenth-century China. This term stressed the common literate culture these officials supposedly acquired through preparation for the civil service examinations, in contrast to the often semi-literate aristocracy of the Jesuits' native Europe. The term "literati" – its origins and its connotations – are thus Western and neither translate nor describe any specific Chinese term or institution. In the Sung, *shih ta-fu* referred to all graded officials, of which there were about 40,000 in late Northern Sung.³⁷ But many of these officials, especially those in the lower ranks of the military bureaucracy, never sat for examinations and were barely literate. Neither their background nor their educational profile conforms to earlier or modern Western notions of a *literatus*. Among the total number of all graded officials, about 3,000 were civilian "administrative-class" officials (*ching-ch'ao kuan*). In 1213, about 40 percent of this group, or 1,200, had passed the examinations and were highly literate. These officials staffed the upper levels of the civilian court administration and served in top provincial posts. In Sung usage, the term *shih ta-fu* sometimes refers in a general way to this elite group within the general bureaucracy. From these 1,200, about two dozen at any one time served in court positions that afforded them regular participation in the decision-making process. It is thus not proper to think of all Sung officials as literati, nor to equate literati with *shih ta-fu* in general. Literati, as used in this chapter, refers to civil officials who served in

³⁶ For Han Yü, see Charles Hartman, *Han Yü and the T'ang search for unity* (Princeton, 1986); for Ou-yang Hsiu, see James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien), *Ou-yang Hsiu: An eleventh-century Neo-Confucianist* (Stanford, 1967); and Ronald C. Egan, *The literary works of Ou-yang Hsiu* (1007–72) (Cambridge, 1984).

³⁷ For an example of the term *shih ta-fu* used in 1086 to refer to all graded officials, see *HCP* (1979) 386, p. 9401. For a Southern Sung example, where *shih ta-fu* refers to all officials who received salaries and promotions, see Wang Yung, *Sung-ch'ao yen-i i-mou lu* (1227; *T'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* (hereafter *TSCC*)) ed., 2, pp. 9–10.

these upper ranks of Sung government. Most Sung writings on political theory and practice, especially in the Northern Sung, emanate from this group of people.³⁸

The literati government of Northern Sung was firmly based on an examination system adapted from T'ang antecedents.³⁹ But, although the mechanics of the two systems functioned in similar ways, their use and their effect on the two societies were totally different. The T'ang system produced about thirty *chin-shih* (presented scholar) graduates per year, most of whom were members of the existing hereditary aristocracy. These *chin-shih* were only a tiny fraction – according to one calculation 6 percent – of all T'ang officials. The T'ang examination system in fact served to fast-track promising members of the aristocracy into the top echelons of government, a government whose rank-and-file members qualified for office by attending schools or through military service. By contrast, the Sung examination system graduated on average about 200 *chin-shih* per year, and these graduates soon made up about 40 percent of “administrative-class” officials.⁴⁰ Finally, in contrast to T'ang, the Sung examinations brought into government large numbers of those whose families had little or no record of prior government service.⁴¹

This altered role of the examinations in Sung produced a bureaucracy more broadly based than in any previous Chinese society. A standard and certainly valid component of the Naitō hypothesis was the contention that the Sung founders, especially T'ai-tsung, used the examinations as a recruiting mechanism to establish support for the dynasty among different segments of the population. A modern student of Sung government has suggested that the Sung civil service may even be viewed as a “representative” institution that parceled out power and status to different elements in the society, thus ensuring a wide range of support for the dynasty.⁴² There evolved, therefore, especially in the

³⁸ English-language scholarship on Sung often equates *shih ta-fu* with “literati” or “elite.” One should not, however, assume that all *shih* were literate, a notion that the translation of *shih* as “elite” sometimes fosters. For example, when Chu Hsi (1130–1200) wanted to emphasize the literate nature of a particular *shih*, he wrote *wen-shih* (a literary *shih*); see *Chu Hsi chi*, ed. Kuo Ch'i and Yin Po (1245; Chengtu, 1996), p. 4172. As used in this chapter, “literati” refers generally to administrative-class officials who had passed the *chin-shih* examination.

³⁹ For a full description of the Sung examination system and its social implications, see John W. Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning in Sung China: A social history of examinations*, new ed. (Albany, 1995); Lee, *Government education and examinations in Sung China*, pp. 139–71; and Lo, *Introduction to the civil service of Sung China*, pp. 86–102.

⁴⁰ Chaffee, *Thorny gates*, pp. 15–16; and Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 80–1.

⁴¹ Lee, *Government education*, pp. 211–13, using a study by Sun Kuo-tung, states that 30.8 percent of “prominent Chinese officials” in the period 998–1126 came from families of “lowly ranked officials or locally powerful families” and 47.3 percent came from “poor families.” The remainder were sons of “big clans or high officials.”

⁴² Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 83–6. According to Lo, the major stakeholders in the Sung civil service were “the children of the civil service elite, members of the military, the clerical sub-bureaucracy, and the population at large” (p. 84).

first hundred years of the dynasty, a literati government, comprising several thousand members who were more socially diverse, but more culturally and intellectually cohesive, than in the T'ang or before.

LITERATI IDEAS ABOUT GOVERNMENT

Chapters elsewhere in this volume describe this literati culture in detail, especially its education and relation to intellectual and philosophical values. This section concentrates on how the full development of literati culture in the eleventh century generated a theory – if not a practice – of government that remained largely intact for the entire Sung period. It will describe how an extreme application of the same values that first generated and sustained this theoretical model frustrated its practical implementation, which came near to realization only for a brief period in the mid-eleventh century and perhaps again under Hsiao-tsung (r. 1162–89) in the Southern Sung.

Sung scholars, trained in the long tradition of Chinese allegorical commentary, liked to think in metaphors. One often finds in their writings two metaphors for government: the state is like the human body; the state is like a net. Early in 1069, Fu Pi had just been appointed Chief Councilor (*tsai-hsiang*). Too ill to attend court, he sent the young Emperor Shen-tsung, then twenty-one and only a year into his reign, a series of basic position papers on how government should operate. He began,

The proper way between a sovereign and his servitors is just to be a single body. The sovereign is the head. The members of the State Council are the arms, legs, heart, and backbone. The policy critics and censors are the eyes and ears. And all the other officials at court and in the provinces are the bones and joints, the tendons and muscles, the veins and arteries.⁴³

Several months later, Ssu-ma Kuang used the same image of the state as a human body, and combined it with the metaphor of the net, to argue that Shen-tsung should not allow Wang An-shih to set up temporary administrative units that circumvented normal administrative procedure.

Why do we say government has a body? The sovereign is the head; the ministers are arms and legs. Top and bottom are linked together, court and province are governed together, like the ropes in a net, like the strands of silk.⁴⁴

Both metaphors stress simultaneous co-ordination and subordination among hierarchical units of government. Su Hsün (1009–66) developed the net

⁴³ Tseng Tsao-chuang and Liu Lin, eds., *Ch'üan Sung wen*, 360 vols. (Shanghai and Ho-fei, 2006) (hereafter CSW (2006)), Volume 28, p. 371.

⁴⁴ CSW (2006), Volume 55, p. 138.

metaphor to describe the Sung relation between court and province. According to Su, the Sung achieved a balance between the overly permissive attitude toward regional power of the ancient Chou dynasty (1146–256 BC) and the authoritarian centralism of the ancient Ch'in: "In our Sung system of government – county (*hsien*), prefecture (*chou*), and circuit (*lu*) officials – the large link together the small, such that the ropes draw the strings together, and all unite at the top." The image is one of a purse seine, where the larger ropes provide structure and co-ordination for the smaller ropes, yet all work together for a common purpose.⁴⁵ Both the metaphor of the body and that of the net are ancient, from the *Book of documents* (*Shu-ching*) and the *Book of poetry* (*Shih-ching*) respectively, but these Sung writers elaborate on the archetypal metaphors to describe contemporary institutions.⁴⁶ Fu Pi adapts the former to apply to his conception of the four major units of Sung government: monarch, ministers, censors (*yü-shih*), and other officials. Su Hsün uses the latter to describe what he believes is a unique Sung solution to the problem of center and province.

The Fu Pi and Ssu-ma Kuang texts from which these metaphors derive are long tracts that laid out for Shen-tsung the essential principles of Sung government. Both were written to warn against the rise of Wang An-shih, and both became classics, often included in Southern Sung anthologies. Ssu-ma's text is entitled *T'i-yao lun* (*Discourse on the essentials of the body*). The graph *t'i*, sometimes expanded to *kuo-t'i* (the state body), here represents something close to the English concept of the "body politic" and occurs often in the mid-eleventh century to mean the totality of state administration and the principles that govern it, or, in colloquial English, "the system." We may draw upon these two tracts to describe the theoretical foundations of Sung government. There are four overlapping areas of concern: (1) for balance of function, (2) for openness, (3) for consensus, and (4) for due bureaucratic process.

The state-as-body metaphor derives from Chinese medicine. Both authors stress that a healthy body is *ho* (harmonious, in accord), a condition that prevails when all parts of the body are intact, perform their own function, and act in consort with each other. Any element that is either weaker or stronger than it should be produces an imbalance in the system and leads to illness and incapacity. A key principle of Sung government was this notion of a balance of function, either among its three major decision-making units – monarch, ministers, and censors – or within the major units themselves. The Southern Sung official Lin Li (*chin-shih* 1142) wrote that "the sovereign has the power to

⁴⁵ Su Hsün, *Chia-yu chi* (*Ssu-k'ü ch'üan shu* (hereafter SKCS) ed.) 1, pp. 3a–4a.

⁴⁶ For other examples, see Fan Tsu-yü, *Fan T'ai-shih chi* (SKCS ed.) 22, p. 3b: "Only in the policies of our dynasty are top and bottom linked together, light and heavy forming a system, like the body controls the arm, and the arm controls the fingers." For a Southern Sung example, see Ch'en Liang, *Ch'en Liang chi*, ed. Teng Kuang-ming (Peking, 1987) 2, p. 27, and SS (1977) 436, p. 12933.

govern, the ministers have the power to examine, and the censors have the power to critique." Power in this case is *ch'üan*, literally the weight or counterpoise of the steelyard balance still commonly used today in rural Chinese markets to weigh small amounts of commodities. For Lin Li, an administrative imbalance occurred when any of the three elements of government became "heavy" and outweighed its counterparts. He argued that Emperor Hsiao-tsung, in an attempt to counteract a previous period when the "weighted minister" (*ch'üan-ch'en*) Ch'in Kuei (1090–1155) had dominated the court, had overweighted the monarchical function. Lin claimed that the emperor had abrogated to himself and to his minions certain functions that properly belonged to officials who occupy ministerial positions: Hsiao-tsung's actions thus disturbed the balance of the body politic.⁴⁷

One must emphasize that Sung scholars conceived of this balance as a balance of function, not as a balance of power in the same sense that the US Constitution divides power among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of American government. As we shall see below, in theory, all power in Sung government was vested in the monarch, who was the only ultimate source of authority. The power of any official to undertake any action derived from power that the emperor delegated to him and that the emperor could revoke at any time. However, as the metaphors imply, the function of the head is to co-ordinate the actions of the other parts of the body, not to attempt physically to perform their actual functions. The imperial will (*sheng-chih*), expressed as a written edict, is the vehicle through which the emperor rules. Yet, in order to eliminate error and forge consensus, a complex system of checks and correctives subjects the imperial will to oversight and review. The classical division of function among the Three Departments (*San-sheng*), into which the central Sung administration was divided after 1082, speaks precisely to this issue: "the Secretariat obtains the imperial will; the Chancellery resubmits the memorial; the Department of State Affairs (*Shang-shu sheng*) promulgates the action."⁴⁸

There is no Chinese term that conforms to the notion of "openness." Yet this word may subsume a variety of ideas that center on the traditional Chinese opposition between *kung* (impartiality, public-mindedness) and *ssu* (partiality, private-mindedness). This opposition, likewise, derives from the earliest Chinese texts, the *Book of documents* and the *Book of poetry*, but Sung government was the first to use the value of impartiality as a base for creating discrete public institutions. An early formulation of the ideal comes from the *Shih-chi* (*The grand scribe's records*) by Ssu-ma Ch'ien (c. 145 BC–c. 86 BC): "If you have

⁴⁷ SS (1977) 394, p. 12027.

⁴⁸ This language, repeated often in Sung texts, derives ultimately from the *T'ang lin-tien* (*The sixfold statutes of T'ang*) of 738; see Ssu-ma Kuang in CSW (2006), Volume 55, pp. 314–15.

something to say that concerns the public interest, say it in public; if you have something to say that concerns a private interest, the king does not receive matters of a private interest.”⁴⁹ Sung political thinkers put a high value on *kung-i* (public opinion) and tinkered endlessly with ways to incorporate public opinion into the decision-making process. One should emphasize that *kung-i* does not mean “public opinion” in the modern English sense of the expression. It means a consensus of what upper-echelon literati officials believed to be the best course of action on a given issue.

In 1065 Ssu-ma Kuang came close to arguing that public opinion, gathered and expressed through the mechanism of consultative assemblies (*chi-i*), might trump the authority of the emperor. Such assemblies of top court officials convened upon order of the emperor throughout the dynasty to discuss major policy issues. They produced written decisions and voted on the final draft of the document to be transmitted to the emperor.⁵⁰ Ssu-ma writes that since human beings and Heaven (*t'ien*) share similar natures, then the will of the majority must represent what Heaven wants. He does not argue that what Heaven wants is always the best course of political action, simply that the emperor, who is inferior to Heaven, has the obligation to listen to the moral authority of Heaven, expressed as majority opinion.⁵¹ The 1069 tracts of both Fu Pi and Ssu-ma Kuang argue that the sovereign should not make appointments based on his own personal preferences, or the opinions of a few close advisers, but must do so only after a wide solicitation of opinion confirms the soundness of his own choices.

The Censorate and the Bureau of Policy Criticism – the eyes and ears of the body politic – were the major organs through which public opinion was to be funneled into court decision making. These institutions did not begin to assume their mature role in Sung government until the 1030s, but Ou-yang Hsiu immediately recognized their potential for giving the literati a major voice in court affairs. In 1034 he wrote a letter of congratulation to Fan Chung-yen (989–1052), who had just been appointed a remonstrant. Ou-yang wrote that, since the official rank of a remonstrant was not high, common thinking considered the position insignificant. But, Ou-yang argued, all other positions, save that of chief councilor, confined officials to speak only on matters related to their specific charge. “The remonstrant relates to every issue in

⁴⁹ Ssu-ma Ch'ien, *Shih-chi*, 10 vols. (91 BC; Peking, 1959) Volume 10, p. 415.

⁵⁰ SHY (1966) *I-chih* 8, pp. 1a–b; SS (1977) 120, pp. 2821–2.

⁵¹ CSW (2006), Volume 55, pp. 63–4; HCP (1979) 205, pp. 4975–6. For an excellent analysis of this memorial, see Carney T. Fisher, “The ritual dispute of Sung Ying-tsung,” *Papers on Far Eastern History* 36 (1987), esp. pp. 118–19. This article provides a good sense of how the major components of Sung government, at mid-century, interacted with each other to resolve one of the major intellectual and political disputes of the day.

the empire and to public opinion for all the age . . . and although low in station, he ranks therefore on a par with the chief councilor.”⁵² At the end of the century, writers looked back with awe and nostalgia at the power of the mid-century remonstrant to channel public opinion against higher authority. In 1086, the Censor Liu Chih (1030–97), after writing numerous memorials in an effort to dislodge the Chief Councilor Ts’ai Ch’üeh (1037–93), remarked – no doubt somewhat rhetorically – “never since the founders has a member of the State Council who went against public opinion failed to resign his position after even one accusation from a Censor or remonstrant.”⁵³

The concern for consensus arose as a corollary to the concern for public opinion in decision making. The medical value of “harmony” (*tiao-ho*) required that, after consultation and discussion, all officials should support the final decision, which became at that point a formalized expression of the imperial will. The 1069 memorials of both Fu Pi and Ssu-ma Kuang insist that the government can only be harmonious when the monarch exercises decisively his authority to forge a consensus. Ssu-ma Kuang informs Shen-tsung that in Han times lower-level officials universally supported imperial decisions because these were issued in the name of the chief councilors after wide consultation. At present, however, Shen-tsung’s indecision has led to a condition where “officials endlessly attack each other with clever screeds and smart talk” and push their private agendas.⁵⁴

The Sung concern for formal consensus manifested itself in many ways. Most obvious was the requirement that edicts and formal pronouncements, theoretically the product of consultation and consensus, be signed by all responsible officials before they could be validly promulgated. There are many references to such requirements, especially in the late Northern Sung period. For example, Liu Chih insists in 1086 that proper protocol had always required that all senior Secretariat–Chancellery (*chung-shu men-hsia*) officials endorse appointment nominations from that agency, thereby to ensure “the harmony and consent of all involved.”⁵⁵ Secretariat directives required the signatures of all chief councilors and assistant chief councilors.⁵⁶ Imperial edicts (*chao-tz’u*) required the signatures and seals of State Council members, as well as those of the supervising officials of the lower agencies involved. One of the rare

⁵² CSW (2006), Volume 33, pp. 65–7. Southern Sung anthologies widely cite this letter.

⁵³ HCP (1979) 364, p. 8720. See also Charles Hartman’s discussion and translation of a passage from Su Shih (1037–1101) on “public opinion” in Charles Hartman, “Su Shi on public discourse,” in *Sources of Chinese tradition from earliest times to 1600*, ed. William Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, 2nd ed. (New York, 1999), Volume 1, pp. 639–41.

⁵⁴ CSW (2006), Volume 55, p. 143.

⁵⁵ Hsü Tzu-ming, *Sung tsai-fu pien-nien lu*, ed. Wang Jui-lai (c. 1220; Peking, 1986) 9, p. 531.

⁵⁶ Shen Kua, *Meng-hsi pi-t’an* (TSCC ed.) 1, pp. 2–3.

surviving original copies of a Sung dynasty edict concerns a local Shan-hsi dragon deity who was ennobled in 1110 for his assistance in ending a drought. The document is signed by sixteen officials, including all six members of the State Council, the two supervising officials of the Ministry of Personnel, and three clerks. There are forty-three seals.⁵⁷

A concern for due bureaucratic process, in essence an insistence on the correct processing of documents, emerged as soon as large numbers of literati began to impact government in the 1020s and 1030s. Political writers insist that due bureaucratic process guarantees balance, openness, and consensus, and functions as a barometer of these other values. As we shall see below, the orderly processing of large numbers of documents was vital to both the audience (*ch'ao*) and the memorial systems. These mechanisms were the two central institutions of Sung decision making and generated the imperial edicts that provided the legal and regulatory foundations of Sung government. An elaborate set of interlocking bureaucratic procedures, aimed to protect the integrity of these documents, arose early in Jen-tsung's reign and reached its most complex form in the 1080s. Sung political writers saw this system as a major defense against functional imbalance and authoritarianism, either from the emperor or from the chief councilors. Tirades against violations of due documentary process form a mainstay of Southern Sung political commentary and assume that a return to the Northern Sung safeguards will act as a bulwark against corruption and disorder.

In 1043, Ou-yang Hsiu, as part of a larger attack on the lingering influence of former Chief Councilor Lü I-chien (979–1044), charged that Lü had been submitting memorials in secret, using eunuch intermediaries to bypass the formal memorial process. Ou-yang states that since Lü is too ill to write such documents himself, his underlings must therefore be writing them under his name and so gaining illicit access to the emperor. Such short-circuiting of the memorial process forestalls “public discussion” and destroys the confidence and ability of other officials to perform their designated functions.⁵⁸ As Ou-yang implies, an integral aspect of the memorial system was a division of function among the various offices through which the document passed, a division which allowed designated officials to verify and comment on its contents. The system created a series of ordered checkpoints through which the document had to pass. Specific officials had the power to put a “hold” (*liu*) on a document or “return it for correction” (*feng-po*) to the previous station.

Due bureaucratic process had two aspects that confound simple notions of Sung government as authoritarian. First, each office and each official had a

⁵⁷ See the illustration and brief notice in Yang Shao-shun, “Lü-liang hsien fa-hsien Sung-tai tieh-wen,” *Wen-wu*, 12 (1959), pp. 65–6. Some of these seals may belong to later owners of the document.

⁵⁸ *HCP* (1979) 143, p. 3446.

specific duty to perform. Bypassing a checkpoint would invalidate the document and derail the resolution of whatever matter was at hand. Second, if an official refused to permit a document to pass his station, there was little remedy except to remove the official. Even emperors were reluctant to force a document past a station or to accept the validity of a document that had not been properly processed. An incident from the early years of the New Policies illustrates how these principles played out in real politics.

Early in 1069 Wang An-shih created the *Chih-chih san-ssu t'iao-li ssu* (Finance Planning Commission, literally Bureau for the Implementation of Fiscal Regulations) as a subunit within the Secretariat–Chancellery to co-ordinate financial planning for the New Policies. A separate office with its own staff, the bureau was to be headed by two officials: Wang himself, then serving as assistant chief councilor, and Ch'en Sheng-chih (1011–79), then military affairs commissioner (*shu-mi shih*). In the winter of 1069 Ch'en became chief councilor, abandoned the New Policies, and, refused to sign documents from the bureau, maintaining it was beneath the dignity of a Chief Councilor to do so. Emperor Shen-tsung suggested one simply abandon the bureau and that Wang and Ch'en could sign documents relating to fiscal matters in their capacity as supervising officials of the Secretariat. Wang refused. He insisted on the necessity of a separate bureaucratic entity to streamline the cumbersome document-flow procedures in the Secretariat. When Shen-tsung suggested that Wang simply head the bureau himself, Wang also refused, insisting that the purpose of the bureau was to co-ordinate fiscal matters between the Secretariat and the Military Affairs Commission (*Shu-mi yüan*). The matter was resolved by appointing Han Chiang (1012–88), then vice military affairs commissioner (*shu-mi fu-shih*), to the new bureau.⁵⁹

This episode reveals several key points about Sung government. First, agreement among the signatory officials was necessary for a given agency to produce valid documents. In this case, Ch'en's refusal to endorse documents effectively brought the bureau's work to a halt. Second, although the emperor had the authority to enforce any solution, the primacy of the need for valid documents constrained him in many ways. In this case, Shen-tsung must either restructure the bureau, which Wang opposed, or replace Ch'en with another official. Simply ordering Ch'en to sign the documents seems not to have been a viable option.⁶⁰

This literati urge for due process conflicted with the theory of absolute imperial power. From the beginning of the dynasty, but with increasing frequency toward the end of the eleventh century, the monarchy issued "directed edicts" (*chung-chih*, *nei-chiang*, *nei-p'i*). These were various imperial

⁵⁹ Yang Chung-liang, *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien chi-shih pen-mo* (1253; Taipei, 1967) 66, pp. 4b–6a.

⁶⁰ For a similar example from this period, see Fisher, "The ritual dispute of Sung Ying-tsung," p. 130.

pronouncements – not generated in response to a submitted memorial – that could be issued in the name of the emperor or empress directly to the relevant agency. The most famous of these were the so-called *yü-pi shou-chao* (imperialy brushed handwritten edicts) often used during Emperor Hui-tsung's reign at the end of the Northern Sung. Various emperors chose to route such "directed edicts" through the Secretariat, thus subjecting them to literati oversight, but other emperors did not do so. The use of "directed edicts," often written and issued by members of the palace without the emperor's knowledge, was a constant sore point in the relations between emperor and literati. In 1132, Emperor Kao-tsung (r. 1127–62), in order to distance himself from the policies of Hui-tsung and to generate literati support for his fledgling administration, ordered a return to the routine review process for edicts. He ordered that all edicts pass through the Secretariat and be subject to its oversight procedures. Chief Councilor Chu Sheng-fei (1082–1144) pushed the matter a step further, insisting that "if a text does not pass through the Secretariat and Chancellery, it cannot be considered an imperial order."⁶¹

In Southern Sung there was a popular and probably apocryphal anecdote about Emperor Jen-tsung. Someone, by implication a eunuch or other member of the palace, encouraged Jen-tsung to "just take hold of power and don't let these ministers play with your majesty and your revenue." Jen-tsung declined. He argued that the exercise of unilateral power would provide no possibility for him to correct mistakes. Submitting decisions to "public opinion," allowing the ministers to implement and the censors to critique, made correcting errors easy.⁶² This text represents the idealized Southern Sung literati vision of what the Northern Sung was like. The reality, of course, was much different. But the vision persisted to the end. In the final years of the dynasty, a 1267 memorial from the Censor Liu Fu (1217–76) noted that over half the appointments listed in the latest administrative gazette had been done through "directed edicts." He concluded, "orderly government is what proceeds through the Secretariat; disorderly government is what does not proceed through the Secretariat. The world's matters should be shared with the world; they are not the private domain of the ruler."⁶³

⁶¹ SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 1, p. 79a–b; Yao-lu (1988) 58, p. 1009.

⁶² This passage does not occur in the *Long draft*. It first appears in the dialogues of Yang Shih (1053–1135); see his *Kuei-shan chi* (SKCS ed.) 6, p. 6a–b. For later uses, see Ch'en, *Ch'en Liang chi* 2, p. 28; Tu Fan, *Ch'ing-hsien chi* (SKCS ed.) 13, pp. 2b–3b; and Hsü Ching-sun, *Chü-shan ts'un kao* (SKCS ed.) 1, p. 2a–b.

⁶³ SS (1977) 405, p. 12248. For similar expressions, see Ch'en, *Ch'en Liang chi* 2, p. 27; Tseng Min-hsing, *Tu-hsing tsa-lu* (1175; TSCC ed.) 8, pp. 60–1; and Wei Liao-weng, *Ho-shan chi* (SKCS ed.) 18, pp. 20a–22a.

THE LITERATI CHARACTER OF SUNG GOVERNMENT

The rulers did not always hold similar views. Rare survivals of imperial dissatisfaction with the literati as administrators afford glimpses of the large gap between theory and practice. Emperor Hsiao-tsung often complained to his chief councilors about defects in the literati character. He found them overly given to "lofty theory" and little inclined to discuss such practical matters as agriculture or finance. They routinely put the affairs of their own families over the interests of the state and did not understand that the Classics were all about economics.⁶⁴ Hsiao-tsung came to office in 1162 with a zeal to reform this officialdom he found so wanting. One of his first acts was to order circuit inspectors to submit daily performance evaluations for each prefect in their jurisdictions. There were seventeen circuits in Southern Sung, each with two inspectors who were ordered to compile these reports. There were about three hundred Sung prefectures. The emperor's order would thus have required the submission and processing of almost 600 individual evaluations every day. As Li Hsin-ch'uan notes laconically, "the press of business made implementation impossible."⁶⁵ That even a novice emperor, as Hsiao-tsung was in 1162, could have contemplated such a measure underscores a prime feature of Sung government practice: its intensely written, bureaucratic character.

A comparison of the *Compendium of Sung documents* with its predecessor, the *T'ang hui-yao* (*Compendium of T'ang documents*) reveals the extent of Sung graphomania. The latter is a tidy work in 100 chapters. The last edition of the *Compendium of Sung documents*, completed by Li Hsin-ch'uan in 1236, ended with the year 1189 – still 100 years before the end of dynasty – and contained 588 chapters.⁶⁶ This vast increase in surviving documentation did not occur because Sung is chronologically more recent than T'ang, or because of the growth of printing in the Sung, although these were certainly factors. It resulted from a profound change in how the court transacted business.

In T'ang and Five Dynasties, the chief councilors sat with the emperor over tea at the morning audience (*ch'ao-hui*) and discussed major issues of state. After the audience, the councilors personally drafted edicts that reflected the results of these conversations and then submitted the drafts to the emperor for approval. The councilors on their own authority decided lesser matters,

⁶⁴ Li Hsin-ch'uan, *Chien-yen i-lai ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (c.1202, *chia* volume; 1216, *i* volume; Peking, 2000) (hereafter *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000)) *i* 3, pp. 542–4. For an extended discussion of this passage, see John W. Chaffee, "The historian as critic: Li Hsin-ch'uan and the dilemmas of statecraft in Southern Sung China," in *Ordering the world: Approaches to state and society in Sung dynasty China*, ed. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 322–3.

⁶⁵ *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 5, p. 131.

⁶⁶ Ch'en Chen-sun, *Chib-chai shu-lu chieh-t'i*, ed. Hsü Hsiao-man and Ku Mei-hua (Shanghai, 1987) 5, p. 163. There are 460 chapters in the modern *Draft compendium of Sung documents*.

such as legal and personnel actions, and drew up the relevant orders which the emperor subsequently endorsed. However, T'ai-tsu's first councilors, because they had all worked for previous dynasties and were apprehensive of their new circumstances, insisted on drafting a *cha-tzu* (administrative memorial) on every matter, and presented these documents at audience to obtain T'ai-tsu's reaction. After the audience, the councilors then drafted their version of the "imperial will" and – jointly signed by all councilors – this document was then resubmitted for T'ai-tsu's final approval. This new procedure eliminated chances of misunderstanding but also removed the informality of the T'ang discussions between the emperor and his councilors. The process was also time-consuming, and the morning audience often lasted into the early afternoon.⁶⁷

The court audience (*ch'ao-hui*) thus changed drastically in character from T'ang to Sung. The social distance between the emperor and his ministers increased. To compensate, there was an increased reliance on the written text, and court procedures became more formalized and bureaucratic. Without wishing to push the analogy too far, at its highest level Chinese government turned from something like a corporate board meeting into something like a real-estate closing, from a policy discussion to a bureaucratic paper shuffle. In time, the results of this turn developed into the torrent of documentation whose remnants the *Compendium of Sung documents* now contains.

Modern scholars, Chinese and Western, usually describe the eleventh-century rise of literati culture in generally positive terms. The Sung *shih ta-fu* themselves were not always so generous. The eleventh century saw not only a rise in the political relevance of literati culture but also an immediate crisis in the viability of that culture. In the T'ang, an anthology known simply as the *Wen-hsüan* (*Literary selections*) was the basic preparation manual for the *chin-shih* examinations. The work has 100 chapters. Its Sung continuation, the *Wen-yüan ying-hua* (*Blossoms from the garden of literature*), completed in 987, has 1,000 chapters. In short, the amount of prior writing that literati were expected to control proliferated beyond the capacity of all but the most gifted to master.⁶⁸ By Southern Sung, this crisis had brought about fundamental changes in reading and studying habits, new commentaries on the Classics, new educational institutions such as private academies, and the growth of private printing. It is also directly related to the graphomaniac character of Sung administration and to the culture of the Sung bureaucrat.

⁶⁷ Chiang Shao-yü, *Sung-ch'ao shih-shih lei-yüan* (1145; Shanghai, 1981) 27, p. 346, quoting from the *Chin-p'o i-shih* of Ch'en Wei-yen (973–1030), which does not survive. This passage, however, also occurs in Wang Tseng, *Wang Wen-cheng kung pi-lu* (TSCC ed.), p. 6a–b.

⁶⁸ For more on this development, see Charles Hartman, "Poetry," in *The Indiana companion to traditional Chinese literature*, ed. William H. Nienhauser Jr. et al. (Bloomington, 1986), pp. 71–2.

During the military crisis at the end of the Northern Sung, Teng Su (1091–1132) observed that the Jurchen army enjoyed a number of advantages over the Sung. The Jurchen were better able to control their troops because “their written communications are brief and fast; ours are prolix and slow.”⁶⁹ Chu Hsi also frequently criticized the delays and bottlenecks that plagued Sung administration and bemoaned the contemporary excess of “empty paperwork.” He once saw a Military Affairs Commission dossier from the T'ai-tsu era and praised the “speed and simplicity” of its documentary process. His own age, he lamented, required three levels of administration and a chief counselor's approval to appoint a minor functionary to hold a lamp during the emperor's visits to the ancestral temple.⁷⁰

A major reference work contains separate entries for 117 different kinds of edicts, orders, declarations, decrees, rescripts, memorials, petitions, notes, interoffice memoranda, and other assorted bureaucratic documents.⁷¹ In addition, as we shall see below, the operation and maintenance of the Sung civil service system also required the production and preservation of vast amounts of written documentation. Control over this documentation was vital to the exercise of power in the Sung state. As the example of Wang An-shih and Ch'en Sheng-chih makes clear, administrative success was uncertain at best, impossible at worst, unless one could ensure the movement of relevant documents past bureaucratic checkpoints. Since one way to control the progress of documents was to control those personnel appointed to the stations through which they were required to pass, administrative procedures originally designed to promote openness eventually fostered secret deal making and faction building.

Control over current documents was not enough. Exercise of power in Sung China also required control over past and future documents; that is, over archives and the writing of history. Through the Northern Sung period, the State History Office (*Shih-kuan*) was located next door to the office of the chief councilors, and the senior chief councilor (*shou-hsiang*) was usually appointed concurrent director of the History Office (*t'ung-hsiu shih-kuan hsiu-chuan*). Given the overriding concern for precedent in Chinese decision making, access to documents that recorded prior decisions was crucial to the generation of present policy. The writing and rewriting of history thus became a continual process, a natural extension of the audience and memorial systems. Struggles over access to past documents and the changing interpretations that

⁶⁹ SS (1977) 375, p. 11605.

⁷⁰ Li Ching-te, *Chu-tzu lei-yü*, ed. Wang Hsing-hsien, 8 vols. (1270; Peking, 1986) 127, p. 3043.

⁷¹ Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien*, pp. 619–29. For suggested English translations for many of these terms, see Robert M. Hartwell, “A guide to documentary sources of middle period Chinese history: Documentary forms contained in the collected papers (*Wen-chi*) of twenty-one T'ang and Sung writers,” *Bulletin of Sung-Yüan Studies* 18 (1986), pp. 133–82.

political movement brought to these documents were often at the center of factional infighting, especially in the late Northern Sung. An example from that period – a brief history of the so-called *Su-li so* (Office of Accusation Adjudication) – may illustrate this point.

In 1068, Wang An-shih began a tactic of using legal proceedings to remove his opponents from office.⁷² During the period from 1068 through 1085, therefore, many officials were accused and convicted of crimes that related to their opposition to the New Policies. With the change of government in 1086, the Office of Accusation Adjudication (*Su-li so*) was established to clear these officials of the former charges. Those who could prove that extenuating circumstances or personal grudges had motivated their accusers were invited to petition the office to have the offense legally removed from their records. These petitions naturally contained details of the former “crimes” and the refutations were often phrased in language critical of the New Policies. Twelve years later, in 1098, with advocates of the New Policies now again in control, these documents from the now defunct office were used to reopen judicial cases against the same officials the office had previously cleared. The emperor appointed two censors to review the dossiers and ordered that “the name and position of any official whose original disposition or whose documentation submitted to the Office of Accusation Adjudication contains language disrespectful to the former court shall be reported.” The diary of Tseng Pu (1035–1107) records that 897 officials were “rectified” in this way.⁷³

As this example implies, political factions (*tang*), which formed as soon as the government assumed its distinctive literati cast in the early eleventh century, were a prominent feature of Sung political life. Although earlier and later dynasties also had political factions, their Sung manifestation is famous for its persistence and its degree of integration into Sung political structures. Some scholars trace the beginnings of modern political parties to the Sung factions, and some aspects of this comparison may be valid. But the Sung factions were fluid arrangements, basically extensions of the older T’ang factions, loose alliances centered around powerful political personalities. Membership was always unstable, even for short periods of time. Although a given intellectual or political agenda was often present, the strength of a Sung faction depended primarily on the political skills of its leader. Also, because factions were almost always defined publicly in negative terms, there was never public acknowledgment of membership. Formal membership lists were compiled only in the negative counterexample, where one faction endeavored legally to prosecute its opponents. No one, even the leader, could always be sure who

⁷² Wei, *Tung-hsüan pi-lu* 11, pp. 124–5; *SS* (1977) 331, pp. 10659–60.

⁷³ *SHY* (1966) *chib-kuan* 3, pp. 75a–78a; *HCP* (1979) 499, pp. 11886–7.

was in or who was out. This ad hoc nature was only one of many factors that prevented Sung factions from developing into political parties.⁷⁴

As in modern China, Sung political factions are perhaps best studied as patronage associations. The leader's ability to hold the group together depends on his continued ability to generate positions, promotions, preferments, contracts, and contacts for its members. Several features of the Sung civil service itself fostered the development and persistence of factions. Sponsorship endorsements for promotions (*chü-chu*), where a senior sponsor guaranteed the behavior of a junior, and "protection privilege" (*yin*), where senior officials could grant civil service entry to younger kin, both contributed to faction formation. Social factors were also involved. Officials often took younger scholars into their houses as "house clients" (*men-k'o*) where the clients acted as tutors, secretaries, or copyists. As the official career of the client developed, his relationship with his patron remained. Under certain circumstances, it was even possible for a senior official to use *yin* privilege for a house tutor. Also, upper-echelon literati maintained very large immediate families. One official might often support a household of forty or more individuals who lived together.⁷⁵ And literati families often intermarried. Given these large family structures and extensive intermarriage, many top officials, especially in Northern Sung, were related to each other through marriage. Although modern scholars seldom detect simple correlations between faction and family, Emperor Hsiao-tsung knew whereof he spoke when he complained that the literati put their families before the state.

The Sung factions also never became political parties because literati culture never developed a neutral vocabulary to refer to the political opposition. Loyalty to a political superior, especially to the sovereign, was a paramount Chinese virtue. But the concept of a loyal opposition was anathema to the ethical absolutes of texts such as the *Analects* and the *Mencius*, the new mainstays of Sung Confucian orthodoxy. A key eleventh-century development in Chinese political discourse was the adaptation of the old Confucian terms *chün-tzu* (gentlemen, superior men) and *hsiao-jen* (small men, inferior men) to refer to contemporary political figures. Although originally not without political overtones, in the old texts these terms referred primarily to individuals who had successfully or unsuccessfully developed their inner natures according to a prescribed regimen of Confucian moral cultivation. Beginning with the advent of literati culture in the 1020s and 1030s, however, Sung writers began to

⁷⁴ See Ari Daniel Levine, *Divided by a common language: Factional conflict in late Northern Song China* (Honolulu, 2008).

⁷⁵ For the size and composition of literati families, see Kinugawa Tsuyoshi, *Sung-tai wen-kuan feng-chi chib-tu*, trans. Cheng Liang-sheng (Taipei, 1977), pp. 92-4.

employ these terms in contemporary political discourse to label themselves (as *chiün-tzu*) and their opponents (as *hsiao-jen*). By the 1050s, this distinction had entered the basic vocabulary of political discourse. The importance of this rhetorical development cannot be overestimated. The distinction helped to fuel the intense factional politics of the late Northern Sung and became a central fixture of *Tao-hsiieh* political rhetoric in the twelfth century. By the thirteenth century, *Tao-hsiieh* teachers had formulated a history of the entire dynasty based on their own determination of who had behaved as *chiün-tzu* and who as *hsiao-jen*. And these judgments form the basis of much of the official *Sung history* of 1345.

The distinction also became the basis for defining the role of the emperor in Sung government. Fu Pi's 1069 memorial to Shen-tsung links political disharmony directly to the court's simultaneous employment of *chiün-tzu* and *hsiao-jen*. The emperor's role is to distinguish between the two and so remove the cause of disharmony. Ssu-ma Kuang made the same point, arguing that the function of the sovereign is "to distinguish the straight from the oblique." Both authors stress that the emperor should employ "public opinion" to help him make these distinctions. This rhetoric was applied here against the rise of Wang An-shih, but the imperial injunction to "distinguish" became the legal justification for the factional purges of the early twelfth century and after.

The rhetoric of "distinction" was also applied retroactively. The most famous factional episode in earlier Chinese history had been the so-called Niu-Li controversy (*Niu Li tang-cheng*) in the ninth century.⁷⁶ In his *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* (*Comprehensive mirror that aids administration*), Ssu-ma Kuang quoted the remark of Emperor Wen-tsung (r. 826–40) that it would be easier to rid the country of the Ho-pei rebels (*Ho-pei fan-chen*) than of the Niu (Niu Ch'eng-ju, 780–848) and Li (Li Te-yü, 787–850) factions. But in a long comment Ssu-ma put the blame for the problem squarely upon the emperor's shoulders: Wen-tsung himself was to blame because he had failed in his duty to distinguish between *chiün-tzu* and *hsiao-jen*.⁷⁷ The adoption of this rhetoric of distinction as a principle of historical classification and analysis created enormous problems for the writing of contemporary history. Each change of administration required a wholesale revision of documents, since a new administration could hardly employ officials whom the emperor had formerly distinguished as *hsiao-jen* – hence the Office of Accusation Adjudication. With every change of

⁷⁶ See Michael T. Dalby, "Court politics in late T'ang times," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 3, Part 1: *Sui and T'ang China*, 589–906, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 639–54.

⁷⁷ Ssu-ma Kuang, *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien*, 20 vols. (1086; Peking, 1976) 245, pp. 7899–900. The Yüan commentator (Hu San-sheng, 1230–1302) notes that Ssu-ma's historical stance on factionalism resulted directly from his experiences during the 1068–85 period. For a similar, earlier passage, see Ssu-ma Kuang's 1058 "Essay on Factions," *CSW* (2006), Volume 56, p. 153.

administration after 1068, the *chün-tzu* became *hsiao-jen* and vice versa, and the practice of rewriting history continued well into Southern Sung. The official history of Shen-tsung's reign, the *Shen-tsung shih-lu* (*Shen-tsung veritable records*) was revised five times between 1091 and 1138. One is reminded of Simon Leys's observation that continual purges and factional realignments made the rewriting of the official history of the Chinese Communist Party so tedious that one eventually stopped writing it altogether.

THE CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM

Civil and military officials

It is common to speak in English of a "Sung civil service system." But Sung officialdom differed in major ways from modern systems of professional civil service. First, the Sung system divided officials into two broad categories: civil (*wen-kuan*) and military (*wu-kuan*). The English term "Sung civil service" applies to all Sung officials, both civil and military, not just to the civil-side, or *wen*, officials. Second, Sung officials were not full-time employees in the modern sense. Most officials only spent about 50 percent of their careers in functional positions (*ch'ai-ch'ien* – often translated as "commission"). Half their time was spent actually working for the state, but a convoluted and time-consuming process of reassignment consumed the other half. This system generated long periods of downtime and also provided for sinecures between functional positions. The lengthy periods of voluntary and involuntary time off help explain the extensive and varied nonofficial activities of Sung bureaucrats. Some used this time to produce the copious amounts of literature and scholarship for which the period is renowned. Others devoted themselves to private business ventures that enriched themselves and their families. Many did both.

For the purpose of this chapter, "officials" will be defined as persons who held *p'in* (grade, rank, level) in the Sung personal ranking system for government employees. Such officials were called *kuan-yüan* in Sung parlance, a term usually rendered into English as official, functionary, mandarin, or bureaucrat. Sung society sharply distinguished between these graded officials and the lesser categories of ungraded government employees such as clerks and village officers, who in English are often referred to collectively as the "sub-bureaucracy."⁷⁸ The Censorate, in conjunction with other relevant

⁷⁸ There is no adequate study in English of the clerks, but see James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien), "The Sung views on the control of government clerks," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 10 Nos. 2-3 (December 1967), pp. 317-44; and Umehara Kaoru, *Sōdai kanryō seido kenkyū* (Kyōto, 1985), pp. 501-620. On village officers, see Brian E. McKnight, *Village and bureaucracy in Southern Sung China* (Chicago, 1971).

central government agencies, kept an "official register" (*pan-pu*) of officials on active service. The register was updated quarterly and included all graded officials who either held office or were qualified to hold office. It excluded those who were retired, in mourning, or "disenrolled" (*ch'u-ming*) for misdeeds. Officials received formal "patents of office" (*kao-shen*) for each functional position to which they were appointed. Various colored official robes (*kuan-fu*) visibly marked their status as officials as well as their position in the hierarchy (purple the highest, scarlet the middle, green the lowest). More importantly, government census records designated families headed by an official as "official household" (*kuan-hu*). This status carried significant financial and legal advantages, including reduction or remission of certain tax obligations, the right to use legal proxies that buffered officials from normal court proceedings, and immunity from corporal punishment.⁷⁹

Formal court audience protocol emphasized the basic division of Sung officialdom into civil and military. As the emperor sat in formal audience and faced south, civil officials stood to his left on the east and military officials stood to his right on the west. Two separate systems of personal rank (*kuan-p'in*) – with different numbers of ranks and different names for the ranks in the two systems – also reinforced this division into civil and military. Furthermore, in the Ministry of Personnel, the appointment process for the two groups was divided into a "left selection" (*tso-hsüan*) for civil and a "right selection" (*yu-hsüan*) for military officials.

Each side, civil and military, was also divided vertically, by hierarchy, into two broad divisions. On the civil side, the lower division was called *hsüan-jen* (selection men), because the Ministry of Personnel determined their appointments through a "selection" process to be described below. Most scholars who write in English call this group "executory officials." The upper division of civil officials was in Chinese *ching-ch'ao kuan* (literally, "capital and court officials"), and these are known in English as "administrative officials." To be promoted out of the "executory" into the "administrative" division, an official had to undergo a process known as *kai-kuan* (change in official status), a lengthy bureaucratic ordeal that could take up to ten years to accomplish. Administrative officials were no longer subject to "selection" but "shot for vacancies" (*she-ch'üeh*) in a separate Ministry of Personnel process that was less demeaning and dilatory. Although *kai-kuan* was not as vital for military officials, their side too was divided into a lower division called *hsiao shih-ch'en* (servitors minor) and a higher division called *ta shih-ch'en* (servitors major).

⁷⁹ For details on the privileges of *kuan-hu* status, see Robert P. Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen: The elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 48–9; Brian E. McKnight, "Fiscal privileges and the social order in Sung China," in *Crisis and prosperity in Sung China*, ed. John Winthrop Haeger (Tucson, 1975), pp. 79–99; and Brian E. McKnight, "Song legal privileges," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 105 No. 1 (1985), pp. 95–106.

There was a correlation between an official's personal rank and the type of functional position for which he qualified and to which he was likely to be appointed. Administrative-class officials staffed the supervisory positions in the central administrative agencies in the capital, including all supervisory posts in the Three Departments. In the provinces, they served in top positions as circuit intendants, prefects (*chih-chou*), and controller-general (*t'ung-p'an*). Executory officials were mostly lower-level provincial officials such as county magistrates (*chih-hsien*) and county sheriffs (*hsien-wei*). In the capital, servitors major held posts related to court ceremony and security, and acted as guards, attendants, and ushers. Eunuchs were often appointed to servitors major positions, where they maintained the emperor's storehouses and financial accounts and ran the secret service. Both at court and in the provinces servitors major also formed an elite officer corps for the army. In the provinces, they might also hold provincial positions as circuit intendants or military commissioners. Servitors minor were the bottom of the official ladder. They served as county police officials and inspectors of local militia, and staffed the local offices of the government monopoly bureaus that sold wine, tea, and salt.

These divisions of Sung officialdom arose from the dynasty's origins among the militarized states of tenth-century China. These regimes were direct descendants of the independent provincial military governorships (*chieh-tu-shih*) of late T'ang. When these magnates made appointments, either to their own headquarters or to local monopoly shops, they used military titles under their own command and control structure. If one of these provincial magnates eventually claimed title as Son of Heaven (*T'ien-tzu*), he then laid a smattering of old T'ang civil titles for central government functionaries over his administration's existing military structure. This practice continued in early Sung. But as T'ai-tsung's policy of recruiting civil officials through the examinations began to bear fruit, and, as the civil structure of central administration began to cohere in the reign of Emperor Chen-tsung, the numbers of civil and military officials assumed a proportion they would retain for the remainder of the dynasty.

Military officials were not professional soldiers as such. Although they might serve tours of duty as army officers, their next position might not be with the army.⁸⁰ Rather they were officials whose *p'in* grades were in the military rather than the civil personal rank system. Wang Ying-lin insists that the dynasty maintained no prejudice toward either side and that officials moved back and forth between both systems.⁸¹ An equal number of civil and military officers, for example, stand as stone sculptures that line the approach to the tombs of the Sung emperors. However, a considerable disparity of

⁸⁰ For a useful survey of this distinction, see Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 61-70.

⁸¹ *Yü-bai* (1988) 127, p. 13a-b.

perceived prestige did develop between the two systems. When literati, who were mostly civil officials, came to dominate the central administration early in the eleventh century, the functional positions for military officials tended to concentrate on security, finance, and low-level secretarial and accounting work. The two systems therefore developed different cultures. A majority of Sung officials in all four divisions came into office through *yin* privilege. However, an analysis of the entry methods of those who entered through avenues other than *yin* privilege reveals a stark difference between the civil and military sides. On the one hand, most civil-side officials who did not use *yin* privilege entered through the examination process. On the other hand, imperial clansmen, army transfers, and transfers from the clerical service occupied an equally strong minority position among non-*yin* military officials.

Over the course of the eleventh century, Sung officialdom developed a structure in which administrative-class civil officials occupied most positions of power, surrounded by support staff drawn from the ranks of military officials. There was an enormous social distance between the two groups. One often reads in the biographies of Sung officials that a high-ranking central-government official was transferred as punishment to a provincial office of the wine monopoly. In this case, the personal rank of the official might drop slightly, but his functional position would plummet from one normally held by senior civil administrative officials to one normally held by military servitors minor. One would be hard-pressed to find a parallel in American government, but a situation where an Assistant Secretary of State might be transferred to serve as a rural county sheriff would approximate the social distances between the top and bottom of these two divisions of Sung officialdom.

The question how many Sung officials there were at any given time is complex. The "official registers" do not survive. However, a variety of historical sources quote numbers from the "official registers" and provide scattered statistics for various time periods and different divisions of officials. Table 1 contains a representative sampling of these statistics, arranged according to the four classes of civil and military officials discussed above.⁸²

The numbers reveal several trends and patterns. First, from the late tenth through the middle of the eleventh century, the total number of officials doubled; then doubled again by the end of the Northern Sung. It decreased in the early Southern Sung, but rose to a new high in the late twelfth century, before declining slightly and remaining constant to the end of the dynasty. Since Southern Sung was physically smaller than Northern Sung and Sung

⁸² This table is based on statistics gathered in Li Hung-ch'i (Thomas H. C. Lee), "Sung-tai kuan-yüan shu te t'ung-chi," *Shih-huo yüeh-k'an* 14 (September 1984), pp. 17–29. See also Lee, *Government education and examinations in Sung China*, p. 225; Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, p. 28; and Chaffee, *Thorny gates*, p. 27.

Table 1. *Numbers of civil and military graded officials*

Period	Civil officials		Military officials		Total	Source ^a
	Administrative	Executory	Servitors major	Servitors minor		
Early Sung					13,000	Li, p. 249
997	800					<i>HCP</i> (1979) 42, p. 882
1023–31	2,000			4,000		Li, p. 249
1041–8	2,700	10,000				Li, p. 249
1046	2,700	10,000		6,000		<i>Yü-bai</i> (1988) 119, 30b
1049					17,300	<i>Yü-bai</i> (1988) 119, 31a
1064–7					24,000	Hung, p. 653
1080					34,000	<i>Yü-bai</i> (1988) 117, 24b
1086	2,800	10,000	2,500	13,000	{28,300} ^b	<i>HCP</i> (1979) 386, p. 9401
1111	4,000					<i>SHY</i> (1966) <i>hsüan-chü</i> 23, p. 7b
1112					43,000	<i>HCPSP</i> 31, p. 14b
1119		16,512	6,991	23,700		Han Piao
1122				31,082		<i>SHY</i> (1966) <i>hsüan-chü</i> 25, p. 23a
1165–73	3,400	7–8,000				Li, p. 249
1191	4,159	12,869	5,173	11,315	33,516	Hung, p. 653
1196	4,159	13,680	6,525	18,070	{42,434}	Li, p. 249
1201	3,133	15,204	6,854	12,616	37,807	Li, pp. 249–50
1213	2,392	17,006	3,866	15,606	38,870	Li, pp. 757–8

^a Sources, in addition to standard abbreviations used in this chapter, are:Li – Li Hsin-ch'uan, *Chien-yen i-lai ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi*.Hung – Hung Mai, *Jung-chai ssu-pi*.Han Piao – Han Piao, *Chien-ch'üan jib-chi* (TSCC ed.) 1, p. 3.*HCPSP* – Huang I-chou et al., *Hsü tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien shih-pu* (Peking, 2004)^b Figures in square brackets are not original and were derived from adding the separate totals for the four classes of official.

administrative geography remained largely fixed (a population increase engendered neither a jurisdiction division nor an increase in staff), the Southern Sung figures represent a more drastic increase over late Northern Sung than the gross numbers suggest. Also, as will be explained below, the gap in data from 1127 through 1165 is probably related to political developments during this period. Second, the ratio of civil to military officials remained constant from the middle of the eleventh century to the end of the dynasty, with military officials slightly outnumbering civil officials. Third, within both civil and military categories, the ratio of lower- to higher-division officers varied greatly from period to period, with the rough average being about one higher-division official for every three in the lower division. Lastly, one must emphasize that these numbers represent only the number of individuals that were qualified to hold office. The number of actual, functional positions for them to occupy – the number of Sung officials on the job at any one time – probably never increased much above 16,000.

As noted above, based on the method of entry, the Sung civil service was more broadly based than that of T'ang. For the T'ang, the *Hsin T'ang-shu* (*New T'ang history*) preserves statistics on those who attended the yearly "selection examinations" (*hsüan-chü*), a process that qualified a candidate for appointment to a functional position. Forty-five percent qualified to attend because they had completed a course of study at a school, 40 percent by virtue of prior military service, less than 10 percent through *yin* privilege, and about 5 percent were clerical transfers.⁸³ For the Sung, Li Hsin-ch'uan preserves statistics on the total number of officials in 1213 and adds information that reveals by what entry method these officials qualified for their first position as a graded official. In the administrative class of civil officials, over 50 percent entered through *yin* privilege and 40 percent through regular examinations. In the executory class, almost 40 percent entered through *yin* privilege, 25 percent through regular examinations, and 30 percent through "facilitated degree examinations" (*t'e-tsou ming*).⁸⁴ Among the military classes, 44 percent of the servitors major entered through *yin* privilege and a third entered as transfers from the army. Of the servitors minor, half came through *yin* privilege, a quarter were imperial clansmen, 10 percent came as army transfers, and another 10 percent as clerical transfers.⁸⁵

⁸³ Ou-yang Hsiu et al., eds., *Hsin T'ang shu* (1060; Peking, 1975) 45, p. 1180; see also Robert des Rotours, *Le traité des examens: Traduit de la nouvelle histoire des T'ang* (Paris, 1932), pp. 279 ff.; and Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 80–2. For a description of the T'ang "selection examination" see des Rotours, *Examens*, pp. 42–4.

⁸⁴ On facilitated examinations, see Chaffee, *Thorny gates*, pp. 24, 27–8; and Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 90–1.

⁸⁵ *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) i 14, pp. 757–8; for detailed tabulations and analyses of these statistics, see Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 85–6; Chaffee, *Thorny gates*, p. 22; and Umehara, *Sūdai kanryō seidō kenkyū*, p. 426.

Methods of entry

Li Hsin-ch'uan's numbers confirm that 57 percent of graded officials on active duty in 1213 had entered the service through *yin* privilege. The graph *yin* means "to shelter, to cover, to protect." A tradition dating to the Han period, "protection privilege" refers to the Chinese practice whereby the emperor granted to certain high officials the right to "protect" their families by directly appointing designated sons and grandsons to office. Although it was used sparingly in the T'ang, the early Sung rulers, as in so many other areas, took this moribund institution and transformed it into a major instrument of Sung policy. The Sung system of *yin* privilege, together with the growth of literati examination culture in the early eleventh century, transformed the character of Chinese officialdom.⁸⁶

T'ai-tsu, as the Sung founder, laid down basic rules that governed the use of *yin* privilege. T'ai-tsung, in order to staff the bureaucracy of his growing empire, so liberalized these policies that, by the reign of Chen-tsung, the system had already produced a drastic oversupply of officials.⁸⁷ As a result, the state attempted to impose tighter restrictions on who could designate and who could receive *yin* privilege. But, in one of the enduring contradictions of the Sung state, the few officials who warned against the abuses of the *yin* system were the very officials whose many colleagues benefited most from it. In 1043, a scale-back of *yin* privilege was the second of Fan Chung-yen's ten proposals for government reform, but opposition to this item undermined support for the entire package.⁸⁸ Ninety percent of the sons of Northern Sung chief counselors entered officialdom through *yin* privilege, and only 10 percent through the examinations.⁸⁹

The Sung system of *yin* privilege granted to officials above a certain grade the right to designate not only sons and grandsons but also brothers, the sons of brothers and sisters, and, in some cases, even unrelated persons for "protection." The recipients received an immediate personal-rank grade (and immediate "official-household" status), which then qualified them to compete for a functional position. The recipients thus bypassed the highly competitive

⁸⁶ For the basic sources on *yin* privilege, see *SS* (1977) 159, pp. 3724-35; 170, pp. 4096-9; and Hsieh Shen-fu et al., eds., *Ch'ing-yüan t'iao-fa shih-lei* (1202; Taipei, 1976) 12, pp. 156-75. The best detailed study is Yu Piao, *Sung-tai yin-pu chih-tu yen-chiu* (Peking, 2001). See also Umehara, *Sōdai kanryō seido kenkyū*, pp. 423-500, which is usefully summarized in Patricia Buckley Ebrey, "The dynamics of elite domination in Sung China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 48 No. 2 (December 1988), pp. 502-6; Miao Shu-mei, *Sung-tai kuan-yüan hsüan-jen ho kuan-li chih-tu* (K'ai-feng, 1996), pp. 54-71; Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien*, pp. 638-9; and Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 102-9.

⁸⁷ *HCP* (1979) 4, p. 95; 18, p. 400; 39, p. 832; 84, pp. 1911-92; 92, p. 2131; 132, pp. 3125-7.

⁸⁸ *HCP* (1979) 143, pp. 3433-5; for a discussion, see James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien), "An early Sung reformer: Fan Chung-yen," in *Chinese thought and institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago, 1967), pp. 112-14.

⁸⁹ Umehara, *Sōdai kanryō seido kenkyū*, p. 476.

and time-consuming examination process for civil officials or the active army service required for transfer to graded status for military officials.

The system, like virtually all aspects of the Sung civil service system, was based on a sliding scale. The higher the designating official, the more recipients he could appoint, the greater kinship distance from him the recipients could be, and the higher the rank grade his recipients would receive. For example, according to regulations in effect at the end of the Northern Sung, a chief councilor, at grade one of the personal-rank system, could appoint a son to grade twenty-eight, a grandson to grade twenty-nine, nephews and "clients" to grade thirty-six. But a lower official, perhaps a vice director (*yüan-wai-lang*) in one of the Six Ministries (*Liu-fu*), at grade twenty-two where the right to dispense *yin* began, could appoint sons, grandsons, and nephews only to grade forty.⁹⁰ These differences were considerable. Since administrative class began at grade thirty, the sons and grandsons of chief councilors began their careers as administrative-class officials, bypassing executory class and the *kai-kuan* hurdle altogether. However, their nephews, appointed to grade thirty-six among the lower echelons of executory class, were not so fortunate. At the bottom of the scale, recipients of grade forty held pre-executory rank and were not yet eligible for appointment to any functional position.

The policies allowed officials to name *yin* recipients on the occasion of the triennial suburban sacrifices (*nan-chiao*), on the emperor's birthday, upon their own retirement from office, upon their own death through final testaments, and upon other special occasions such as the ascension of a new emperor or the naming of a new empress (*huang-hou*). Regulations concerning who could designate how many recipients on each of these occasions varied greatly during the dynasty. The surviving statute books from the Ch'ing-yüan era (1195–1201) indicate that a chief councilor could designate ten recipients at the suburban sacrifices, three upon his retirement, and five in his will. It appears therefore that a single long-lived, highly successful official could designate dozens, if not hundreds, of recipients during the course of his career. Furthermore, empresses, consorts, imperial princes, and clansmen (*tsung-shih*) were, as we shall see below, also high-ranked officials and major dispensers of *yin* privilege. Many literati placed blame for the excesses of the *yin* privilege on appointments to military rank for imperial relatives.⁹¹ Yet abuse of the system was widespread. Even if a dispenser had already designated all his eligible kin as recipients, social and financial pressures from distant kin and unrelated

⁹⁰ SS (1977) 170, pp. 4096–7; for a detailed exposition, see Umehara, *Sōdai kanryō seido kenkyū*, pp. 443–56.

⁹¹ Winston Lo estimates that if appointments designated as "imperial clansmen" in the 1213 roster are counted as *yin* appointments, then the proportion of servitors minor that entered through *yin* would rise to 73 percent; Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, p. 107.

friends often pushed officials into questionable use of their remaining quotas. For example, a critic reports that each suburban sacrifice in the 1130s generated 4,000 *yin* nominations.⁹² Emperor Hsiao-tsung, who himself attempted an unsuccessful reform of *yin* privilege, well understood his official's preference for family over state.

A full discussion of the Sung system of official recruitment through examinations is covered elsewhere in this volume and also in excellent, widely available secondary studies.⁹³ The most important, socially and politically, of these examinations were the *chin-shih* (presented scholar) examinations. These were usually held biennially in the capital before 1070 and triennially after that date. Averaged on an annual basis over the course of the entire dynasty, these examinations produced about 200 graduates per year. The actual numbers ranged from less than a dozen early in the dynasty to 987 in 1226.⁹⁴ Those who passed the *chin-shih* examination entered officialdom "with formal qualification" (*yu ch'u-shen*). This designation opened career tracks unavailable to all those who attained graded status "without qualification" (*wu ch'u-shen*), largely those who entered through *yin* privilege. This distinction was fundamental to all aspects of the civil service. Those "with qualification" entered the system with higher personal-rank grades, received faster promotions, suffered less downtime between functional positions, and were given preference in the competition for better positions. As a result, the top decision-making echelons of government were attainable only to those who "had qualification."⁹⁵

Yet even *chin-shih* graduates were not all created equal. Those who passed the examination were subsequently ranked and divided into five classes at the ensuing Palace Examination (*tien-shih* or *yü-shih*), conducted in the presence of the emperor. In the Northern Sung, the top three places received immediate administrative-class status, jump-starting their careers by at least ten years.⁹⁶ For example, during the reign of Jen-tsung, the *chin-shih* examinations were given thirteen times, and 4,570 candidates passed. From the total of thirty-nine men who took the top three places in these years, all but five eventually

⁹² Yao-lu (1988) 115, p. 1861.

⁹³ Chaffee, *Thorny gates*; and Lee, *Government education and examinations in Sung China*; also Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 86–102.

⁹⁴ For yearly totals, see Chaffee, *Thorny gates*, pp. 192–5; and Lee, *Government education*, pp. 279–85.

⁹⁵ For the importance of "qualification" in one's subsequent career, see Edward A. Kracke Jr., *Civil service in early Sung China, 960–1067: With particular emphasis on the development of controlled sponsorship to foster administrative responsibility* (Cambridge, MA, 1953), pp. 91–3; for examples of this distinction in statutes governing promotion, see SS (1977) 169, pp. 4023–4, 4038–40; and the surviving late Sung Ministry of Personnel statutes, the anonymous *Li-pu t'iao-fa*, preserved in *Yung-lo ta-tien*, ed. Chieh Chin et al. (1408; Peking, 1986) 14629, p. 1b. Umehara Kaoru, "Civil and military officials in the Sung: The *Chi-lu-kuan* system," *Acta Asiatica: Bulletin of the Institute of Eastern Culture* 50 (1986), esp. pp. 4–5, contains a useful chart that illustrates these different career tracks through both the civil and military ranks.

⁹⁶ SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 2, pp. 6a–10b.

rose into the highest ranks of government.⁹⁷ On the other hand, as the over-supply of graded officials increased in the Southern Sung, steps were taken to lengthen entry into functional positions even for *chin-shih* graduates, and those who placed in the fifth class had to wait three years for their first positions.⁹⁸

The facilitated-degree examinations were also a significant entry method, especially in the Southern Sung. Facilitated degrees were awarded to those who had failed a minimum of five times to pass the regular *chin-shih* examinations and were over fifty years of age. They were given an easier version of the palace examination and also ranked into five classes. The higher classes obtained low-level executory positions, usually as provincial educators.⁹⁹ However, by the time they were appointed, these scholars were too old to accrue the time required for promotion to administrative class. The roster of 1213 pegs them at 30 percent of executory officials, but only 2 percent of administrative officials.

There were also other ways to become a Sung official. Transfers from the army into graded military positions were possible under a number of conditions, including as a reward for military accomplishment or after retirement from the regular army.¹⁰⁰ One could also purchase office by making a financial "contribution" (*chin-na*). Two percent of civil officials and 1 percent of the military officials on the 1213 roster attained office in this way. Such offices were always low-ranking and often ungraded, and prospects for promotion were not good. The government usually resorted to the sale of office only to raise cash for local or national emergencies. Surviving price lists from the early Southern Sung indicate that the highest prices purchased only the lowest executory or servitors minor rank.¹⁰¹ In 1180, Chu Hsi proposed the sale of similar offices to raise money for famine relief.¹⁰² Wealthy families took advantage of these opportunities to attain "official-household" status and to facilitate their interaction with local officials.¹⁰³

The roster of 1213 thus presents an image of the full Sung civil service. Contrary to what some secondary literature suggests, that image does not depict a homogeneous group of Confucian educated "literati." Rather, the totality of Sung officialdom was a heterogeneous mixture of different cultural and social strata, each with its own criteria for admission to office, aspirations for

⁹⁷ SS (1977) 155, pp. 3615–16.

⁹⁸ Chao Sheng, *Ch'ao-yeh lei-yao*, ed. Wang Jui-lai (1234; Peking, 2007) 2, p. 59.

⁹⁹ *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 13, pp. 277–8; Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien*, p. 635.

¹⁰⁰ For details, see Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 109–10.

¹⁰¹ SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 55, p. 43a–b.

¹⁰² Chu, *Chu Hsi* 16, p. 640; Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 110–11.

¹⁰³ For details on the purchase of official status and its role in fostering links between the official and the commercial world, see Chu, "Sung-tai shang-jen te she-hui ti-wei chi ch'i li-shih tso-yung," p. 134.

accomplishment, and prospects for career advancement. The examinations played a role only for civil officials, and only top administrative-class officials were expected and required to possess a high standard of cultural literacy. A travel diary composed by Lu Yu (1125–1210) in 1170 provides a vehicle to confirm official statistics concerning the number of officials who had passed examinations. In his *Ju-Shu chi* (*Diary of a journey to Szechwan*), Lu Yu records the full title of each of the graded civil officials he met on a six-month journey from Shao-hsing (Yüeh-chou) on the east China coast to Kuei-chou (Ching-chiang fu) in Kuang-nan-hsi. Only eight of thirty administrative-class officials, or 27 percent, had passed an examination. For executory officials, the figure was 32 percent.¹⁰⁴ For military officials, promotion guidelines often required only that they be able to write out their family biography and read legal statute books. Two factors served to unite these disparate elements into an effective administrative force. First, a unified system of personnel management, especially after 1082, linked all officials together with a common set of procedures for personnel decisions. Second, intense competition for functional positions and for promotions, especially for civil officials, ensured that these procedures were widely understood and, in the main, rigidly enforced.

The personal-rank system

Personnel management in the Sung utilized a dual ranking system. There were two separate hierarchical structures, one that ranked the officials personally (*chi-lu kuan*, literally “stipendiary office,” sometimes also called “titular office”), and another that ranked the functional positions they sometimes occupied (*tzu-hsü*). The two systems interacted to form a sophisticated system of personnel management, a system whose leading modern student has called it “a crystallization of subtle thinking reminiscent of Sung ceramics.”¹⁰⁵ The personal-rank system, one for civil and one for military officials, provided each official with a grade, or after 1082 a “rank” (*chieh*), in a hierarchical structure that simultaneously ranked all officials. At any given point in his career, an official’s *p’in* grade fixed many outward manifestations of status and ranked him in relation to other officials. It determined, for example, where he stood at formal court ceremonies, the color of his official uniform, and the size of his funeral. More importantly, as we have seen, it determined the extent of his *yin* privilege. On the one hand, since an official always had personal rank – it is

¹⁰⁴ Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, p. 260 n. 47. For the text, see Lu Yu, *Lu Yu chi*, 5 vols. (1220; Peking, 1976), pp. 2406–59; for a fully annotated translation, see Chang Chun-shu and Joan Smythe, *South China in the twelfth century: A translation of Lu Yu’s travel diaries, July 3–December 6, 1170* (Hong Kong, 1981).

¹⁰⁵ Umehara, “Civil and military officials in the Sung,” p. 2.

what made him an official – status and benefits from personal rank were permanent. On the other hand, benefits from a functional position ended upon termination of that particular tour of duty. The personal-rank system therefore provided for a certain standardization and unity of procedure among all Sung officials.

The Sung personal-rank system was descended from the Five Dynasties practice of using titles of empty functional positions in the former T'ang central government to rank officials for the purposes of protocol and salary.¹⁰⁶ This practice became regularized in the early eleventh century into a hierarchical list of several hundred titles. These titles were eventually grouped and ordered into sixty-six steps that separated the lowest from the highest graded official. Yet promotion need not necessarily proceed one step at a time on this ladder. An examination graduate could theoretically advance to the top in thirty-six promotions.¹⁰⁷ Because of the number and redundancy of the titles (some steps contained a dozen essentially equal titles) and because, as Sung central government grew, many titles, especially in the Secretariat and Censorate, were no longer “empty,” there was continual pressure for reform. The Yüan-feng reforms of 1082 dispensed with the use of functional titles for personal rank and resulted eventually in a simple system of thirty-seven steps for civil and sixty steps for military officials. Each step was designated by a single “rank title” (*chieh-kuan*). As completed and regularized in the ensuing years, this revised personal-rank system remained in use until the end of the dynasty.¹⁰⁸

Table 2 lists the thirty-seven personal-rank titles for graded civil officials, as these became finalized in 1117. The Arabic numbers that equate to each grade (and which are used in this chapter), from grade thirty-seven (*T'i-kung lang*) at the bottom to grade one (*K'ai-fu i-t'ung san-ssu*) at the top, are an arbitrary device to help Western readers understand the system. Primary sources after 1082 always refer to these thirty-seven steps by their names, not by numbers. Numerical *p'in* rank was used to indicate the hierarchy of the functional positions that most often corresponded to these steps on the personal-rank system (often rendered into English as 4a, 6b, etc.). As noted above, the most basic division was between executory class (ranks thirty-seven through thirty-one) and administrative class (ranks thirty through one). It is useful to think of the administrative class, as its creators did, in terms of a further subdivision into six groups of titles. These groupings represent a survival from the older,

¹⁰⁶ For the personal-rank system, see Kracke, *Civil service in early Sung China*, pp. 78–80; Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 141–71; Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien*, pp. 27–44 and 560–602.

¹⁰⁷ The protocol list of 1038 (SS (1977) 168, pp. 3987–91) became the standard prior to the Yüan-feng reform. For a translation of this list, see Kracke, *Civil service in early Sung China*, pp. 229–35.

¹⁰⁸ For these lists, see SS (1977) 169, pp. 4049–58; also the tables in Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien*, pp. 688, 694–5; and Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 72, 74.

Table 2. *Personal-rank grades: civil-administrative and executory-class officials*^a

	Rank title (<i>chieb-kuan</i>)	Official roster of 1085	P'in grade	Monthly salary	
1	K'ai-fu i-t'ung san-ssu		1b	120	} Ministers-in-attendance <i>Shih-ts'ung</i>
2	T'e-chin		1b	90	
3	Chin-tzu kuang-lu ta-fu		2a	60	
4	Yin-ch'ing kuang-lu ta-fu	2	2b	60	
5	Kuang-lu ta-fu	2	3a	60	
6	(Hsüan-feng ta-fu)		3a	55	
7	(Cheng-feng ta-fu)		3a	55	
8	Cheng-i ta-fu	6	3b	55	
9	(T'ung-feng ta-fu)		3b	55	
10	T'ung-i ta-fu	9	4a	50	
11	T'ai-chung ta-fu	4	4b	50	
12	Chung ta-fu	60	5a	45	} Senior directors <i>Ta ch'ing-chien</i>
13	(Chung-feng ta-fu)		5b	45	
14	Chung-san ta-fu		5b	45	
15	Ch'ao-i ta-fu		6a	35	} Directors <i>Lang-chung</i>
16	(Feng-chih ta-fu)		6a	35	
17	Ch'ao-ch'ing ta-fu		6b	35	
18	Ch'ao-san ta-fu	73	6b	35	
19	Ch'ao-feng ta-fu	87	6b	35	
20	Ch'ao-ch'ing lang	121	7a	30	} Vice directors <i>Yüan-wai-lang</i>
21	Ch'ao-san lang	214	7a	30	
22	Ch'ao-feng lang	284	7a	30	
23	Ch'eng-i lang	387	7b	20	} Court officials <i>Ch'ao-kuan</i>
24	Feng-i lang	489	8a	20	
25	T'ung-chih lang	235	8a	20	
26	Hsüan-te lang	238	8b	15	} Capital Officials <i>Ching-kuan</i>
27	Hsüan-i lang	114	8b	12	
28	Ch'eng-shih lang	103	9a	10	
29	Ch'eng-feng lang	157	9a	8	
30	Ch'eng-wu lang	101	9b	7	
31	Ch'eng-chih lang		8b	25	} Executory Class Officials <i>Hsüan-jen</i>
32	Ju-lin lang		8b	20	
33	Wen-lin lang		8b	15	
34	Ts'ung-shih lang		8b	15	
35	Ts'ung-cheng lang		8b	15	
36	Hsiu-chih lang		8b	15	
37	Ti-kung lang		9b	12	

^a This table combines data from Kung Yen-ming, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien* (Peking, 1997, 2008), pp. 568–74, 688, and 710–11, which rely, in turn, largely on SS, 169, pp. 4051–4, and 171, pp. 4110–11. Ranks in parentheses were added in 1109. Figures for monthly salary represent base salary in strings of 1,000 cash.

pre-1082, system, where each step of the promotion ladder was composed of a group of largely equivalent titles. The boundaries between these six administrative class subdivisions in Table 2 were real demarcators of power in Sung China. As we have seen, the power to dispense *yin* privilege began at grade twenty-two, the first of the vice director grades. With grade fourteen, the first senior director grade, came the power to place *yin* recipients into administrative class. To serve on the State Council required minister-in-attendance grade; that is, grade eleven or above.

Table 2 also shows the numbers of officials appointed to administrative-class grades as recorded in the "official register" for autumn of 1085.¹⁰⁹ There may be gaps in these statistics, but they give a sense of the overall distribution of administrative-class officials across the various rank titles and groups. In addition to an obvious thinning of the numbers as one progresses into the upper ranks, the numbers also reveal important divisions between groups in the middle ranges of the administrative class. The distinct bulge in the court official group (grades twenty-five through twenty-three), with a total of 1,091 officials, the largest of any group, reveals the real promotion barrier between grades twenty-three and twenty-two. The wide disparity between directors (grades nineteen through fifteen) with a total of 160 officials and vice directors (grades twenty-two through twenty) with 619 officials also reveals the importance and the difficulty of promotion above grade twenty. These patterns formed because as early as 1066 the state effectively placed quotas on the number of officials who could be appointed to each group. Promotion across these major boundaries into the above group thus became more difficult.

Promotion

The Sung system of promotion in personal rank was called *mo-k'an* (promotion review), meaning literally to "to grind and examine." The term derives from the rigorous scrutiny of documentation submitted by officials who requested promotion under the T'ang.¹¹⁰ Under the Sung, *mo-k'an* developed into a sophisticated, and perhaps the most important, mechanism for the personnel management of officials. In the early Sung, all graded officials received an automatic one-step upgrade in personal rank by act of imperial grace during the suburban sacrifices every third year. By 1007, this process had evolved into a separate performance review for each official, conducted at three-year intervals

¹⁰⁹ P'ang Yüan-ying, *Wen-ch'ang tsa-lu* (1085; Peking, 1958) 6, p. 72.

¹¹⁰ For primary sources on *mo-k'an*, see the ample material in Anonymous, *Li-pu t'iao-fa*, in *Yung-lo ta-tien* 14629, pp. 1a-30b; SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 11, pp. 6a-54b; also Miao, *Sung-tai kuan-yüan hsüan-jen bo kuan-li chib-tu*, pp. 381-413.

for civil and five-year intervals for military officials. Administrative-class officials submitted the required documentation to the Bureau of Personnel Evaluation (*shen-kuan yüan*). This documentation included patents of appointment for their present and past functional positions and promotions, a biography, annual evaluations, and, when required, recommendations. In 1066, after several failed attempts to slow down the promotion process, these intervals were increased to four and seven years respectively and "holds" were placed at various levels of the hierarchy by instituting quotas for certain grades. Officials who were qualified for promotion to these grades had to queue and wait until vacancies occurred to assume their promotion. The Yüan-feng reform revised these provisions slightly, abolished *mo-k'an* for officials above grade ten, and consolidated all reviews in the newly established Ministry of Personnel. As revised again in the 1130s, these regulations remained in force until the end of the dynasty.¹¹¹

Theoretically, the process of promotion review entailed two components: a review by the relevant central government authority of the yearly performance evaluations written by the official's immediate superior and a verification of the years in service necessary to qualify for the promotion. Every Sung official maintained his own dossier (*yin-chih*, literally "stamped papers"). Whenever he held a functional position, his immediate superior was required annually to annotate the dossier with a brief evaluation of his performance for the past year. One of these annual evaluations (*k'ao*) counted as one year of service credit towards the next *mo-k'an* review. Already by the middle of the eleventh century, however, these "evaluation scripts" (*k'ao-tz'u*) had become so standardized that they became useless for actual evaluation. The annual evaluations became a simple measure of years served. As Fan Chung-yen lamented, "now three evaluations means a promotion, and that's what we call 'performance review.'"¹¹² Hung Mai (1123–1202) has a good note on the decline of the annual evaluation system and quotes from evaluations written by the father of Huang T'ing-chien (1045–1105), who served as a provincial official in the mid-eleventh century. Hung praises the detail of these evaluations, but notes that Huang always gave his subordinates an "average" (*chung*) rating. Subsequently, the phrasing of the evaluations became so standardized that the annual annotation of dossiers was consigned to clerks.¹¹³ In 1091, Fan Tzu-yü (1041–98) complained that the annual evaluations had become useless: "The present Ministry of Personnel rankings of superior, average, and inferior are

¹¹¹ SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 11, pp. 1b–2a, 16a–18a; Anonymous, *Sung ta-chao-ling chi* (1131–62; Peking, 1962) 162, p. 616; and *Yü-hai* (1988) 119, pp. 32b–38a.

¹¹² HCP (1979) 143, p. 3431.

¹¹³ Hung Mai, *Jung-chai sui-pi* (five parts: *sui-pi* 1180, *hsü-pi* 1191, *san-pi* 1196, *ssu-pi* 1197, *wu-pi* 1202; Shanghai, 1978), *ssu-pi*, 7, pp. 698–9.

mere verbiage: there is neither reward to encourage nor punishment to dissuade anybody."¹¹⁴

There were, however, several ways to receive service credits toward *mo-k'an*. The number of actual years served in a functional position, as measured by annual evaluations, was called "years of toil" (*nien-lao*). But actual service was only one way to accumulate service credit. Imperial acts of grace (*ta-she*), as in the beginning of the dynasty, routinely awarded service credits to all officials. The emperor also could specifically reward any meritorious official by conferring service credits toward his next scheduled *mo-k'an* review. And the emperor personally controlled promotions for his highest officials, since the *mo-k'an* process was considered too demeaning for ministers-in-attendance. Also, officials who could no longer themselves count service credits toward their own promotions because of the so-called "laws of halt" (*chib-fa*) were allowed to transfer those credits to their offspring or even to their deceased parents, since in Sung government even dead officials still maintained personal rank.¹¹⁵

Most importantly, *mo-k'an* credits were often either given as inducements and rewards or taken away as punishment. For example, in 1206 those willing to accept functional positions in outlying border areas were offered two years' reduction in *mo-k'an*.¹¹⁶ Such reductions were highly attractive as inducements. Remarking to Wang An-shih on the decline in literati values over the course of his lifetime, Su Shih joked, "Today's *chiin-tzu* would kill for a half-year's reduction in *mo-k'an*."¹¹⁷ On the contrary, postponement or imposition of additional years toward the next promotion review was a common punishment for official transgression. The surviving Ministry of Personnel statutes from the end of the Sung contain a detailed table of correspondences between judicial sentences and *mo-k'an* postponements that range from three months to four years.¹¹⁸ Li Hsin-ch'uan cites an extraordinary example of the use of service credits to climb the personal-rank ladder. Mo Tzu-ch'un (1159–1215) took first place in the *chin-shih* examinations of 1196 and so received immediate administrative-class placement at grade twenty-eight. By 1203, he had been promoted sixteen times and attained grade twelve, a feat that required

¹¹⁴ HCP (1979) 468, p. 11178.

¹¹⁵ The "laws of halt" were one mechanism that linked the personal- and functional-rank systems. They prohibited, for example, a grade twelve official from advancing to grade ten unless he first held a functional position at minister-in-attendance status (*shih-ts'ung*); see Chao, *Ch'ao-yeh lei-yao* 2, pp. 71–2; also Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, p. 268 n. 49.

¹¹⁶ Anonymous, *Li-pu t'iao-fa*, in *Yung-lo ta-tien* 14629, p. 14b; for other examples, see Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, p. 269 n. 53.

¹¹⁷ Shao Po-wen, *Shao-shih wen-chien lu*, ed. Li Chien-hsiung and Liu Te-ch'uan (1151; Peking, 1983) 12, p. 128.

¹¹⁸ Anonymous, *Li-pu t'iao-fa*, in *Yung-lo ta-tien* 14629, p. 7a–b; Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, Table 19 on p. 156.

fifty-eight years of *mo-k'an* credits. But only seven of those credits came from actual "years of toil" in office. The remainder came from a combination of amnesties, merit rewards, credits transferred from his older relatives, and other inducements.¹¹⁹

Also considered a part of promotion review was the most important promotion of all, the "change in official status" (*kai-kuan*) from executory to administrative class.¹²⁰ The "change" was vital to any Sung civil official with aspirations to higher office, since virtually all officials who held court positions were administrative class. Even for examination graduates, failure to achieve *kai-kuan* meant years of drudgery in one provincial post after another. Also, given the large numbers of executory officials who entered via *yin* privilege or with facilitated degrees, *kai-kuan* served as a mechanism to separate the wheat from the chaff and to channel the truly capable into higher office. To be eligible for "change of status" an executory official normally required "three tours and six evaluations"; in other words, he must have completed tours of duty in three separate functional positions and accumulated a total of six years in those positions.

Unlike a usual *mo-k'an* review, however, *kai-kuan* required that the candidate collect five sponsorship endorsements from administrative-class officials on active duty in the provinces, one of whom had to be a circuit intendant.¹²¹ Strict limits were placed on the number of endorsements an official could make. A circuit intendant, allotted only five or six endorsements per year, might have several hundred executory officials working within his jurisdiction. Endorsements were not given lightly, and the competition was fierce. They were good for life and established a bond between the two men, whereby each was made legally responsible for the other's actions (*lien-tso*). The requirement that an executory official collect five endorsements in different locales over an extended period of time was intended to discourage partisanship. However, the process of collecting endorsement was fraught with uncertainties and anxiety. If the endorsing official died or was convicted of a crime, the endorsement was no longer valid. In the late twelfth century, Chou Pi-ta (1126–1204) instituted a system whereby endorsements could be registered with the Ministry of Personnel upon issue and remained valid until used.¹²²

¹¹⁹ *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) i 11, p. 680.

¹²⁰ For primary sources on *kai-kuan*, see Anonymous, *Li-pu t'iao-fa*, in *Yung-lo ta-tien* 14628, pp. 16a–27a; *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) i 14, pp. 747–54; also Umehara, *Sūdai kanryō seido kenkyū*, pp. 250–8; Miao, *Sung-tai kuan-yüan*, pp. 414–30; Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 165–71.

¹²¹ For changes in *kai-kuan* sponsorship regulations, see *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) i 14, pp. 747–8; also Kracke, *Civil service in early Sung China*, pp. 146 ff. Under certain conditions, officials who collected the required five endorsements before the end of the six-year mandatory service requirement were permitted to apply for early *kai-kuan*; see Anonymous, *Li-pu t'iao-fa*, in *Yung-lo ta-tien*, 14628, p. 1a.

¹²² Chou Pi-ta, *Wen-chung chi* (SKCS ed.) 138, pp. 3a–b; Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, p. 212.

After a candidate for *kai-kuan* had accumulated his years in service, collected his endorsements, and survived review of his documents at the Ministry of Personnel, there was one remaining hurdle. The last step before actual "change of status" was an audience with the emperor. But already in 1065 there were 250 approved *kai-kuan* promotions with no positions open for them to occupy.¹²³ In 1086 a yearly quota for *kai-kuan* promotions was set at 100, but this limit was abandoned in the late Northern Sung. By 1117, annual *kai-kuan* promotions had ballooned to 370.¹²⁴ In the mid-twelfth century the quota fluctuated between fifty and ninety, and during the Hsiao-tsung period was eventually fixed at 100 per year.¹²⁵ Approved candidates, nevertheless, were still required to wait for a vacancy before they could be received in audience and appointed to their first administrative-class position.

Historically, soon after its inception, the *mo-k'an* performance review became a highly bureaucratic check on the accuracy of submitted documents. In 1098, Tseng Pu reminded the emperor that if the document review should determine that an official's eligibility for *mo-k'an* "is just one day short, it won't go forward."¹²⁶ The scope and importance of the *mo-k'an* process encouraged a careful system of verification and control for the processing of personnel documents, and together with the memorial process, contributed both to the bureaucratic character of the Sung state and to the rich resources available to its modern historians. At least before the advent of the *Tao-hsieh* critics in the latter twelfth century, many Sung officials viewed this bureaucratic and impersonal nature of performance review in positive terms. As Secretariat drafter, Su Ch'e (1039–1112) composed formal notices for *mo-k'an* promotions, and many of these texts survive in his collected works. A major theme is that the routine, bureaucratic nature of the process insures impartiality. Its rules apply to everyone, "eminent and humble alike." Even promotions for imperial relatives and eunuchs are required to pass through the *mo-k'an* process. In drafting his notice for a military hero, Su implies that the man's exploits would count for nothing unless they were properly credited to him through *mo-k'an*. The process protects both the official and the emperor from perceptions of favoritism.¹²⁷

Functional positions

The Sung system of personal rank was closely intertwined in practice with the separate system of functional rank. This latter system was based on the

¹²³ HCP (1979) 204, p. 4957. ¹²⁴ SHY (1966) *hsüan-chü* 29, pp. 10a–11a.

¹²⁵ *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) i 14, pp. 748–9. ¹²⁶ HCP (1979) 500, p. 11913.

¹²⁷ Su Ch'e, *Luan-ch'eng chi*, ed. Ch'en Hung-tien and Kao Hsiu-fang (Peking, 1987) 27, pp. 560–1, 565–5, 569, 575, 577; 29, p. 605.

functional position which an official held.¹²⁸ The title of every such position had two parts: the first indicated its location and the second indicated the level of authority. For example, Su Shih's first appointment was notary to the administrative assistant of Feng-hsiang prefecture (*Feng-hsiang fu ch'ien-p'an*), where Feng-hsiang designates the location of the duty, and notary to the administrative assistant designates the authority level. In titles of central-government positions, the locator is the name of the office where the duty occurs: Vice Director in the Ministry of Rites (*Li-pu yüan-wai-lang*). Appointment to a functional position was always for a fixed time period, which, depending on the position, might be from a minimum of two to a maximum of four years. Officials were prohibited from serving in jurisdictions where they lived, had relatives, or owned land. Also, the major portion of an official's salary came from the function position he occupied and terminated when his commission expired.

The frequent rotation in functional position was a security and management tool that aimed to prevent officials from developing local ties or establishing too much influence over a given office. But this frequent rotation, and the impersonal nature of job assignment, frustrated the development of technical competence where it was really needed and decreased overall efficiency. For example, in 1145 the Diplomatic Office (*Kuo-hsin so*) of the Military Affairs Commission complained that its translators had all been reposted to commissions outside the capital. It requested that they be posted to shadow positions supervising the Lin-an city gates so they could once again be available in the capital to translate diplomatic correspondence.¹²⁹ Likewise, those few officials who took an interest in history complained frequently that the History Office was seldom staffed with qualified personnel.¹³⁰

Unlike the statistics for graded officials, statistics for the number of functional positions – the number of actual jobs available at any one time for these officials to assume – are extremely rare. The Chinese term *ch'üeh* (billet) denotes both a position and a vacancy in that position, or, in other words, a billet whether filled or unfilled. Documents for the year 1112 place the total number of billets at 14,000, against 43,000 graded officials – a three-to-one ratio of officials to available positions.¹³¹ A confirmation of this ratio comes from

¹²⁸ On functional positions, see Anonymous, *Li-pu t'iao-fa*, in *Yung-lo ta-tien* 14628, pp. 1a–15b; Umehara, *Sūdai kanryō seido kenkyū*, pp. 185–327; Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 115–40; Teng Hsiao-nan, *Sung-tai wen-kuan hsüan-jen chib-tu chu ts'eng-mien* (Shih-chia-chuang, 1993), pp. 88–120.

¹²⁹ Anonymous, *Li-pu t'iao-fa*, in *Yung-lo ta-tien* 14626, p. 14a; Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, p. 119.

¹³⁰ Ch'en Fu-liang, *Chih-chai wen-chi* (*Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'ang* (hereafter *SPTK*) ed.) 27, pp. 4b–6a.

¹³¹ Huang I-chou et al., *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien shih-pu*, ed. Ku Chi-ch'en (1881; Peking, 2004) 31, p. 1039; *SHY* (1966) *hsüan-chü* 23, p. 12a, gives a round figure of 16,000 billets in 1124.

exact figures on the number of servitors minor and available billets for them in 1125: 7,086 billets and 31,082 servitors minor, or fewer than one in four.¹³² This ratio certainly represents a deterioration of the three-to-one ratio that was usual throughout the latter half of the eleventh century. Statistics from 1049 list a total of 17,300 officials and between 5,000 and 6,000 provincial billets.¹³³ A memorial from 1086 states that three officials sit on each billet: the one who presently occupies it, the one who has just been appointed to it, and the one whose appointment is now being processed.¹³⁴

The appointment process

In Sung there were essentially four authorities empowered to make appointments: the emperor, the office of the chief councilors, the Ministry of Personnel, and, under certain conditions, circuit intendants. The emperor personally appointed to functional office all officials with minister-in-attendance status (grade eleven and above). The chief councilors – more precisely the Secretariat for civil officials and the Military Affairs Commission for military officials – made appointments at the senior-director level (grades fourteen through twelve). Such appointments were called “hall appointments” (*t’ang-ch’u*). The Ministry of Personnel processed appointments for all officials of grade fifteen and below.¹³⁵

The actual appointment process, consolidated for most officials after 1082 in the Ministry of Personnel, was among the most complex aspects of the Sung civil service. This complexity arose from no central design but from many years of ad hoc solutions to administrative, personnel, and management problems. The most pressing problems were the drastic oversupply of officials and the need to create mechanisms that fairly rationed billets and regulated upward mobility. The appointment process matched officials with positions in a way that addressed these problems and at the same time gave officials some choice and flexibility in pursuing their careers. Four subsections (*ssu*) in the Ministry of Personnel processed appointments separately for officials in the administrative, executory, servitors major, and servitors minor classes. The ministry ranked all billets for each class into a tiered hierarchy and kept track of which billet was vacant or soon to be vacant.

¹³² SHY (1966) *hsüan-chü* 25, p. 23a. ¹³³ *Yü-bai* (1988) 119, p. 31a.

¹³⁴ HCP (1979) 386, p. 9401. For a similar statement by Su Shih, see *Su Shih wen-chi*, ed. K’ung Fan-li (Peking, 1986) 8, p. 244.

¹³⁵ This division is based on a memorial of 1086 in HCP (1979) 370, pp. 8964–5. In practice, the boundary lines of responsibility for appointments shifted among the three authorities, especially between the chief councilors and the Ministry of Personnel, as the councilors endeavored to exert control over top appointments and patronage networks. See HCP (1979) 404, pp. 9838–9; Umehara, *Sōdai kanryō seido kenkyū*, pp. 225–39; Miao, *Sung-tai kuan-yüan hsüan-jen ho kuan-li chib-tu*, pp. 145–62.

There were five basic tiers for administrative class. Each tier was divided into a theoretical first and second tour of duty, thus creating a hierarchy of ten levels. The five basic tiers in ascending order were (1) county magistrate, (2) controller-general, (3) prefect, (4) judicial circuit commissioner (*t'i-tien hsing-yü kung-shih*), and (5) fiscal commissioner (*chuan-yün shih*). Hundreds of discrete, individual billets were grouped into each of these five basic tiers. Although the titles for each tier derived from provincial positions, central-government positions were eventually inserted into the hierarchy.¹³⁶ The result was an ordered structure for the progression of functional positions an official would hold over the course of his career. One tour of service at the lower level was required in order to advance from one level to the next. To advance from one tier to the next required, in addition to the service requirement, a number of sponsorship recommendations. For example, after two tours of duty in a county magistrate position, an official required two sponsors in order to advance to a first-tour controller-general position. The number of required sponsors varied with an official's entry method. Clerical transfers could require an extraordinary seven sponsors for rank promotion. Promotion for administrative-class officials was a mechanical level-by-level progression; one could skip no levels. For executory-class officials, there were four tiers divided into seven levels. But one could initiate a "change of status" to administrative class from any executory level once the requirements for *kai-kuan* had been met. The position an official held on this tiered hierarchy was his functional rank.¹³⁷

All positions, however, even within the same tier, were not created equal. Geography played a major role. A position as "county magistrate" could vary considerably in power and influence depending on the size and location of the county. The state therefore subdivided both counties and prefectures into seven different grades using a combination of population and distance from the capital. Appointments were made on a sliding scale based on the official's method of entry into service. Appointments into entry-level billets in the best locations were reserved for those "with qualification," while the worst locations went to transfers from the clerical sub-bureaucracy.¹³⁸

Since there were, however, far more officials than billets, and far more billets in bad locations than in good, the Ministry of Personnel, in essence,

¹³⁶ See, for example, *HCP* (1979) 422, p. 10212, where a ministry director (*lang-chung*) is equated to a second-tour prefect.

¹³⁷ For the executory class tiers, see *SS* (1977) 158, p. 3694; and Anonymous, *Li-pu t'iao-fa*, in *Yung-lo ta-tien* 14628, pp. 5b-7b; see also the helpful chart in Teng, *Sung-tai wen-kuan hsiian-jen chih-tu chu ts'eng-mien*, p. 94; and Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, p. 126. For administrative class, see *HCP* (1979) 404, pp. 9832-3; Anonymous, *Li-pu t'iao-fa*, in *Yung-lo ta-tien* 14628, pp. 4a-5b; and the chart in Teng, *Sung-tai wen-kuan hsiian-jen chih-tu chu ts'eng-mien*, p. 104.

¹³⁸ *SS* (1977) 169, pp. 4039-40; and Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, p. 127.

presided over a sort of revolving auction. Officials used their functional rank and other qualifications such as entry method to bid for billets whose “price” varied according to the billet’s desirability. There were four categories of billet. Extraordinary positions (*fei-tz’u*) were those that filled within five days of posting; standard positions (*ching-shih*) filled from six days to three months after posting. After three months the position was downgraded to nonstandard (*p’o-ko*), and if not filled within ten days was then downgraded again to residual (*ts’an-ling*). Extraordinary positions were so attractive that officials whose functional rank qualified them for a higher position were nevertheless eager to take them. At the bottom of the scale, qualifications for residual positions were lowered until they were filled.¹³⁹ The Ministry of Personnel also used this system to punish and reward officials by offering them preference for extraordinary billets or restricting them to nonstandard or residual. Those at the bottom of the pecking order, elderly *yin* recipients, clerical transfers, and those who had purchased office, were often restricted to residual positions.¹⁴⁰

The Ministry of Personnel held quarterly, and sometimes monthly, placement assemblies (*chi-chu*) for executory officials. Officials who had concluded their last tour submitted documentation to establish their functional rank and other relevant qualifications. Since there were many more officials than billets, officials between positions were required to queue up for the opportunity to attend the assembly. Already by 1058, this waiting time could extend up to two years, and by 1086 could stretch up to three years for executory officials.¹⁴¹ A coveted reward for meritorious service was a reduction in waiting time, which could advance one’s place in the queue by three months to a year. When an official’s turn finally came, he joined a group of thirty other office seekers at a ministry assembly. Those still waiting on queue were permitted to listen to the proceedings. The ministry official in charge read aloud the name of a position to which the official whose number was up had been matched. The official was free to reject this match, in which case he returned to the next assembly and was offered another option. He could decline three times, and, under certain conditions of demonstrated hardship, a fourth time, but was required to accept whatever position was offered after that point.

The procedure for administrative-class appointments, called “shooting for vacancies” (*she-ch’üeh*), was similar, except that the process was conducted in writing rather than verbally. Administrative officials were permitted to indicate in order of preference three circuits where they would like to serve their next position. The ministry took these preferences into consideration,

¹³⁹ Anonymous, *Li-pu t’iao-fa*, in *Yung-lo ta-tien* 14620, pp. 26b–27a; 14621, pp. 1a–2a; Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 128–30.

¹⁴⁰ Chao, *Ch’ao-yeh lei-yao* 3, p. 69. ¹⁴¹ *HPC* (1979) 187, p. 4514; 386, p. 9104.

matched their qualifications to available billets, and made an initial proffer. The official could reject two proffers, but was required to accept the third.¹⁴² These procedures allowed the ministry to match available positions with applicants, and still allowed the applicants a certain measure of choice. The ministry could attach a range of qualifications necessary for appointment to each class of billets, and these qualifications were reduced when the position was reduced from standard to nonstandard. For example, all open billets at a certain rank within the monopoly bureau system would be made available to administrative-class officials, who would take their pick of the best locations. The remaining positions would be downgraded to nonstandard and posted at the placing assemblies for executory officials. The system thus required officials to make wrenching decisions. Appointments made to an official who had exercised all his rejections were called "hard appointments" (*ying-ch'ai*) and were seldom preferable to the choices he had previously been offered.¹⁴³

There are random statistics on the numbers of officials on queue at the Ministry of Personnel and the number of open billets, and these statistics show wide variations. In the year 1111, there were over 400 administrative-class officials vying for seventy billets. In 1169, there were 500 executory officials and 340 open billets.¹⁴⁴ Yet many billets in remote locations still remained unfilled for long periods of time. Yang Wan-li (1127–1206) observed that openings for office managers in the military and judicial circuit intendancies in modern Kwangtung and Kwangsi remained open for as long as nine years. Those whose functional rank qualified them for these positions preferred to take nonstandard appointments as prefects or controllers-general in somewhat better, but still less than ideal, locations. As Yang summarized, "The high are unwilling to go; the low are unable to go."¹⁴⁵

Criticism of the system

The statutes of the Ministry of Personnel appear to have provided flexibility both to the state and to its officials. But critics, especially in the Southern Sung, derided the process for its rigidity and its inability to match man and position in any except a mechanical way. The ever-increasing size of the statute manuals that regulated ministry procedures illustrates the haphazard

¹⁴² HCP (1979) 107, p. 2504. For an application template to be used when "shooting for vacancies" see Hsieh, *Ch'ing-yüan t'iao-fa shih-lei* 6, pp. 75–6.

¹⁴³ On the appointment process, see Anonymous, *Li-pu t'iao-fa*, in *Yung-lo ta-tien* 14620, pp. 1a–3a; Miao, *Sung-tai kuan-yüan hsüan-jen bo kuan-li chib-tu*, pp. 162–76; Teng, *Sung-tai wen-kuan hsüan-jen chib-tu chu tseng-mien*, pp. 201–34; and Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 121–37.

¹⁴⁴ SHY (1966) *hsüan-chü* 23, p. 7a; 24, p. 24b.

¹⁴⁵ Yang Wan-li, *Ch'eng-chai chi* (SKCS ed.) 69, pp. 23b–25a.

growth of the bureaucracy. In the mid-1060s these manuals totaled about thirty chapters. Twenty years later, they had grown to 100 chapters. By 1149, they had ballooned to a staggering 425 chapters.¹⁴⁶ The surviving *Li-pu t'iao-fa* (Statutes of the Ministry of Personnel) and the *Ch'ing-yüan t'iao-fa shih-lei* (Classified statutes of the Ch'ing-Yüan period) are but tiny fractions of an enormous corpus of regulation and precedent that governed the lives and careers of Sung officials.

Southern Sung critics lamented that bureaucratic process had taken control of the man. Ch'en Fu-liang (1137–1203) argued, for example, that the regulations had become so complicated that the process reduced even the director and vice director of the ministry to mere signatures on documents prepared by ministry clerks. For their part, Ch'en related, the clerks merely processed papers in strict conformity with the regulations, fully ignorant of and unconcerned with the integrity, honesty, or intelligence of the official involved.¹⁴⁷ Yeh Shih (1150–1223) also decried the vast array of regulations that hamstrung top ministry officials and terrorized those who passed through the appointment process.¹⁴⁸ Stories of clerical corruption already begin to appear by the mid-eleventh century. Sources tell of clerks who withheld notice of vacancies, especially those created when the death of a parent would force an official into mourning and so create a sudden, unanticipated vacancy. The clerks would then sell the unexpected position “off the books.”¹⁴⁹

Other officials chose to satirize the clerks and the regulations. Hung Mai includes the following firsthand account of a Southern Sung personnel transaction in a note entitled “the laughable nature of clerical language.” The pacification commissioner (*ching-chih shih*) at Han-chou in Ch'eng-tu-fu circuit had conferred a temporary patent of nobility on a local deity and requested that the Ministry of Rites (*Li-pu*) make the patent permanent. The ministry denied the request on the ground that the deity had failed to appear in person within the one-year time limit for application of such patents. The commissioner was instructed to inform the deity of this rejection.¹⁵⁰

There was a subtle but important relationship between personal and functional rank. As long as an official continued to apply for and accept functional positions, he could expect to receive *mo-k'an* promotions in personal

¹⁴⁶ Yü-hai (1988) 117, pp. 21a, 25a–26b; SS (1977) 204, pp. 5144–5; Teng, *Sung-tai wen-kuan hsiian-jen chih-tu chu ts'eng-mien*, pp. 45–9.

¹⁴⁷ Ch'en Fu-liang, *Pa-mien feng* (SKCS ed.) 3, pp. 11a–13b.

¹⁴⁸ Yeh, *Yeh Shih chi, pieb-chi* 12, pp. 793–4.

¹⁴⁹ Wang, *Sung-ch'ao yen-i i-mou lu* 5, p. 38. For a clerk who made a career selling inside information from personnel dossiers, see Chou Mi, *Kuei-hsin-tsa-chih*, ed. Wu Ch'i-ming (c.1298; Peking, 1988) *hsü*, 2, pp. 174–5; and Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, p. 136.

¹⁵⁰ Hung, *Jung-chai sui-pi* 16, p. 212.

rank. There were many bottlenecks and roadblocks along the way, but progress proceeded at a known and relatively steady pace. Advancement in functional rank occurred with less regularity, only upon termination of a tour that could last from two to four years. By contrast, the quality of functional positions an official was able to obtain had significant impact on the rate of his promotions in personal rank. Good performance in highly visible positions generated rewards in the form of reductions in *mo-k'an* time. Rewards in the form of reductions in time on the ministry queue decreased downtime between appointments. As a result, officials with similar personal ranks could occupy functional positions at vastly different levels of real authority. Mo Tzu-ch'un, the superachiever who attained grade twelve in only seven years, finished his career as prefect of Wen-chou (Jui-an fu), a functional position that normally required only grade eighteen rank. One personal rank grade above Mo, at grade eleven, an official could serve as assistant chief councilor.

In 1086, Shang-kuan Chün (1038–1115) described the career of an average, upwardly mobile civil official. After passing the *chin-shih* examination, he entered the service at age thirty. Including downtime, he required seven years to complete one "tour" at the executory level and five years for each tour at the administrative level. And so, at age forty-five, he attained *kai-kuan* after two seven-year executory tours. With retirement at age seventy, he had time remaining for only five administrative-level appointments.¹⁵¹ Thus our theoretical official would have finished his career only halfway through the ten-level hierarchy of administrative-class functional positions, or as a first-term prefect, about where Mo Tzu-ch'un ended his career. Any official who rose above the level of prefect in Sung China was either extraordinarily gifted or extraordinarily well connected.

In Sung, the identification of either category of individual depended on the complex relationship between sponsored endorsements (*chien-chü*) and performance evaluations (*k'ao-k'o*). Various types of mutual responsibility, where one individual pledged surety for another (*pao*), were a basic aspect of Sung official life. Surety was used for minor matters, such as identity and document verification, and for major matters such as *kai-kuan* endorsements. Sponsored endorsements were vital to both *kai-kuan* and functional-rank promotions.¹⁵² The state maintained strict controls over the number of endorsements in both categories that ranking officials in any given government unit could dispense. The right to make endorsements was a basic commodity of power in the

¹⁵¹ HCP (1979) 380, p. 9401.

¹⁵² For the basic primary texts on sponsorship, see SHY (1966) *chib-kuan chüan* 27–30; and Anonymous, *Li-pu t'iao-fa*, in *Yung-lo ta-tien* 14627, pp. 1a–37a; also Teng, *Sung-tai wen-kuan hsüan-jen chib-tu chu ts'eng-mien*, pp. 121–67; Miao, *Sung-tai kuan-yüan hsüan-jen ho kuan-li chib-tu*, pp. 268–304; Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 191–9; Kracke, *Civil service in early Sung China*, pp. 102–98.

world of Sung officials. The Ministry of Personnel statutes contain detailed lists of quotas allotted to various units of government, and surviving records show provincial administrators negotiating with the ministry over quotas for endorsement rights.¹⁵³ The right to issue or to withhold endorsements from subordinates was a powerful personnel management tool for Sung officials, and a quota of *kai-kuan* endorsements was often included in the “budget” of new administrative units.¹⁵⁴

The role of performance evaluations is perhaps the most difficult single subject in the general area of Sung personnel management. Primary sources contain the usual wealth of data, but most scholars doubt how effectively any of the surviving schemes and systems of evaluation was ever implemented.¹⁵⁵ Although supervisors were required annually to annotate the personnel dossiers of their subordinates (*k'ao*), the content of these evaluations was perfunctory and not linked to the actual outcome of *mo-k'an*. For example, subsequent to the inauguration of revised standards for performance evaluation in 1061, the sources contain records of only two officials who were actually demoted for poor performance. In both cases, it would seem, the relevant agency had to memorialize the throne to fix the degree of demotion.¹⁵⁶ In short, although there were performance standards, the rigid, quantified structure of promotion review frustrated the development of any mechanism to align the given standards with actual personnel actions. Furthermore, the highly partisan nature of Sung political life also frustrated impartial performance evaluation. Li Hsin-ch'uan's description of Emperor Hsiao-tsung's attempt to impose real performance standards on the system highlights this problem. In 1181, Hsiao-tsung ordered circuit intendants to write annual evaluations of prefects within their jurisdictions, and he ordered the Censorate to monitor the fairness of the process. But both intendants and prefects so abused the system by using it to settle “private” scores that the Censorate was constantly investigating the veracity of their reports. Even verified negative reports still required consultation between the emperor and the State Council to determine an appropriate demotion.¹⁵⁷

Surviving records suggest that promotions or demotions based on actual performance were often related to ad hoc government attempts to raise cash. In other words, the state used reward and punishment as an incentive attached

¹⁵³ SHY (1966) *hsüan-chü* 30, p. 5b; Anonymous, *Li-pu t'iao-fa*, in *Yung-lo ta tien* 14627, pp. 6a–12a.

¹⁵⁴ Anonymous, *Li-pu t'iao-fa*, in *Yung-lo ta-tien* 14627, p. 20a.

¹⁵⁵ For primary sources on evaluation, see SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 59, pp. 1a–30a; SS (1977) 160, pp. 3757–66; also Teng, *Sung-tai wen-kuan hsüan-jen chib-tu chu ts'eng-mien*, pp. 63–87; Miao, *Sung-tai kuan-yüan hsüan-jen bo kuan-li chib-tu*, pp. 358–81; Lo, *Introduction to the civil service*, pp. 172–9.

¹⁵⁶ SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 59, p. 8a; SS (1977) 160, p. 3761.

¹⁵⁷ *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 5, pp. 131–2.

to specific government initiatives. For example, in 1135, performance standards offered inducements to officials who "improved tax registers, organized peoples' militias, increased agriculture and sericulture, and encouraged filial piety (*hsiao-hsing*)."¹⁵⁸ The first three of these categories promoted activities that directly or indirectly increased state revenue. Often the threat for non-performance was quite specific. In 1184, circuit intendants were ordered to include figures for shortfalls in salt quotas in the annual dossier reviews of tea and salt monopoly officials in Huai (Huai-nan) and Che (Liang-che) circuits. Those who fell more than 30 percent below quota were to be referred to the Ministry of Justice (*Hsing-pu*) for the assessment of fines before being allowed to attend their next placement assembly.¹⁵⁹

A final example illustrates the sudden, ad hoc nature of many Sung performance evaluations. In 1104 one decided to measure conformance to new regulations that governed the timely processing of documents through the various units of the Six Ministries. One Shih O (1058–1112), in six months and sixteen days as director of the Bureau of General Accounts (*tu-chih lang-chung*), correctly processed 51,015 documents and was awarded three years' reduction in *mo-k'an*. Ho Ch'ang-yen (1067–1126), a vice director in the Ministry of Rites (*Li-pu yüan-wai-lang*), mishandled eleven documents from a total of 14,428. He was demoted one grade in personal rank.¹⁶⁰ Aside from marveling at standards of efficiency that would put any modern bureaucrat to shame, one may add several relevant facts to these figures. Ho Ch'ang-yen was the first-place *chin-shih* examination graduate of 1097, while Shih O was an older functionary with less renown but more experience.¹⁶¹ Also, the award-winning Shih O did not process the documents himself, but relied upon a staff of seventy clerks then attached to the Bureau of General Accounts (*Tu-chih ssu*).¹⁶² This works out to slightly over 100 documents per clerk per month.

Salaries

Official salaries (*feng-lu*) are another complex issue upon which scholars differ.¹⁶³ The bottom line appears to be that, especially in the lower and middle ranks, and especially in the years before the 1082 reform, Sung officials

¹⁵⁸ SS (1977) 160, p. 3763. ¹⁵⁹ Anonymous, *Li-pu t'iao-fa*, in *Yung-lo ta-tien* 14620, p. 26b.

¹⁶⁰ SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 59, p. 12b.

¹⁶¹ Surviving sources contain only one other mention of Shih O, a notice of his one-grade promotion in 1087 for participating on a committee that revised the law codes of the Yüan-feng era (1078–85); see SHY (1966) *hsing-fa* 1, p. 14b.

¹⁶² SHY (1966) *shih-buo* 51, pp. 43a–b.

¹⁶³ For the basic sources on official salaries, see SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 57, pp. 1a–100a; and SS (1977), 171–2. Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien*, pp. 704–30, tabulates much of this information with great clarity. The leading secondary source is Kinugawa, *Sung-tai wen-kuan feng-chi chib-tu*;

were well paid but not well off. Both Fan Chung-yen and Wang An-shih portray all but the top level of officials as so poor they are unable to marry off their children or bury their parents. The growing numbers of officials and the long waits between positions meant that "in seven years an official is paid only during three." Both authors attribute pervasive under-the-table business activities and official corruption to inadequate salaries.¹⁶⁴ The Shen-tsung reforms addressed these problems and seem to have roughly doubled salaries for many officials. There was indeed a general trend toward higher compensation as the dynasty progressed. Writing in 1199, Hung Mai states that official salaries for entry-level provincial officials had risen by seven to eight times since the mid-eleventh century, a factor roughly twice the rate of inflation during the same period.¹⁶⁵ On the other hand, the eighteenth-century historian Chao I (1727–1814) describes Sung official salaries as among the highest in Chinese history and links official loyalty toward the dynasty to this generous compensation.¹⁶⁶

A major problem is that Sung officials received compensation in many forms, and the value of these compensations is often difficult to judge in modern terms. After the reforms of 1082, there were two broad forms of compensation – base salary (*ch'ing-shou*, literally "pure receipts") and supplements to salary (*t'ien-chih ch'ien*). An official's base salary had three components: (1) a monthly payment in strings of copper cash, with theoretically one thousand coppers to the string; (2) a monthly allotment of grain; and (3) twice-yearly allotments of various kinds of cloth. In all three categories of base salary, an official's personal-rank grade determined how much he received. The salary figures in Table 2 represent only monthly cash payments. An official's personal-rank grade determined his base salary, but he received that salary only when he held functional office.

Officials also received supplements to base salary. These were also paid only when an official held functional office, but the amount and form of compensation were more directly linked to the type of office he occupied. Officials whose functional positions were in the provinces received a portion of proceeds from "office lands" (*chih-t'ien*). These were agricultural landholdings that belonged to provincial jurisdictions; their proceeds were apportioned to the administrative-class officials assigned to that jurisdiction. The prefect of a major prefecture received proceeds from twenty *ch'ing* of land, almost

also Miao, *Sung-tai kuan-yüan hsüan-jen ho kuan-li chih-tu*, pp. 492–523; and Wong, "Government expenditures in Northern Sung China," pp. 62–90.

¹⁶⁴ For Fan Chung-yen, writing in 1043, see *HCP* (1979) 144, p. 3438; for Wang An-shih, writing in 1058, see *CSW* (2006), Volume 63, pp. 334–5. Even early Sung edicts declaring salary increases make a direct connection between adequate salaries and correct official behavior; see Anonymous, *Sung ta chao-ling chi* 178, p. 639, an edict from 971 that established salary schedules for circuit intendents.

¹⁶⁵ Hung, *Jung-chai ssu-pi* 7, pp. 699–700; for inflation figures based on the price of rice, see Kinugawa, *Sung-tai wen-kuan feng-chi chih-tu*, pp. 81–90.

¹⁶⁶ Chao I, *Nien-erb shih cha-chi*, ed. Wang Shu-min (1799; Peking, 1984) 25, pp. 533–4.

300 acres. The lowest-ranking officials received one-tenth of that amount.¹⁶⁷ In some cases, grain from all the office land in the jurisdiction was pooled and divided according to ratios that mirrored the acreage allotment of each official.¹⁶⁸

In place of office lands, officials at court received a supplement to base salary called "assignment office salary" (*chih-ch'ien*). This was essentially a cash supplement that was based on the functional office an official currently held. The amount was calculated on the differential between his personal rank grade and the rank of his functional office. For example, in 1087, Su Ch'e, then at personal rank grade twenty-two, was appointed vice director of the Ministry of Revenue (*Hu-pu yüan-wai-lang*). He received thirty strings of cash as his monthly base salary according to his personal rank and an additional forty-five strings for his vice directorship.¹⁶⁹ It was by this mechanism that official salaries doubled after the 1082 reform. Also counted as supplements to salary were allotments of foodstuffs and basic commodities such as tea, salt, wine, firewood, charcoal, and – that most basic commodity of the Sung official – paper. Horses were also provided, along with fodder, as well as servants. A chief councilor was allotted seventy servants and attendants. But even the lowest-ranking servitor minor had at least one servant. A system of vouchers provided transportation, board, and lodging for an official and his entourage during periods of official travel.

Another major supplement to salary was "public-use money" (*kung-shih ch'ien*). These were funds supplied to government units for entertainment and incidental expenses to be used at the discretion of the unit head. Such expenditures by central-government units were minor, but provincial officials, especially circuit intendants in areas with major concentrations of army units, received sizable amounts of public-use money. In the late eleventh century, such payments could exceed 50,000 strings per year.¹⁷⁰ From the modern perspective, public-use money looks suspiciously like slush funds or perhaps a suburban industrial development agency. Li Hsin-ch'uan has a long section detailing abuses of public-use money during the Southern Sung. In the provinces, a major purpose of the funds was for public-welfare projects. But officials used the funds to open pawnshops, pharmacies, and all manner of moneymaking enterprises, and skimmed off the profits for themselves. It also appears, since the funds were designated for entertainment, that neighboring officials often held banquets and then used public-use money to provide lavish gifts for each other.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ SS (1977) 172, p. 4147; Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien*, p. 730.

¹⁶⁸ SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 58, pp. 11b–12b.

¹⁶⁹ Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien*, pp. 42, 712.

¹⁷⁰ Wong, "Government expenditures in Northern Sung China," pp. 84–90.

¹⁷¹ *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 17, pp. 394–5.

There was clearly an enormous difference between the highest- and the lowest-paid officials. The monthly salaries in Table 2 are deceiving in this regard. The Chia-yu era (1056–63) salary schedule ranges upward from 120 strings per month to a high of 400 strings for imperial princes on appointment as military commissioners, and to a low of 300 coppers (not strings but individual copper coins) for the lowest-ranking official.¹⁷² This differential accounts partially for the disparity in historical opinion on Sung salaries, since Chao I's remarks focus on high-ranking officials. The appointment process, along with the vagaries of political fortune, also forced many Sung officials into cycles of economic boom and bust. Su Shih, for example, spent most of the 1070s in major prefectural posts. He earned income from 300 acres of "office land" and had at least twenty servants, in addition to his base salary. After his trial in 1079, he held no functional office, and thus received no salary, until 1085. In 1080, he budgeted his twenty-person household at 4,500 coppers, or 4.5 strings, per month.¹⁷³ To help gauge the extent of this poverty, six years earlier Wang An-shih had insisted to Emperor Shen-tsung that the lowest executory official required a minimum of 100 strings per month to support his household.¹⁷⁴

A final factor regarding Sung salaries was the high proportion of commodities to cash. Especially after 1082, an official usually received only one-third of the "cash" portion of his base salary in actual cash. The remaining two-thirds were paid in kind. Copper cash was the preferred method of payment, but because coinage was usually in short supply, salaries were often paid in whatever commodity the government had on hand. This practice required officials to sell the commodities to obtain their full cash salaries, and these sales were subject to market fluctuations in commodity prices. As a barometer of sensitivity on this issue, one of the many later complaints against Ts'ai Ching (1047–1126) was that he manipulated the document flow system and deceived the emperor to obtain his full salary in actual cash.¹⁷⁵

A group portrait

The above survey of civil service personnel, recruitment, and management paints a diverse portrait of Sung officialdom, more complex and variegated than the simple image of the "Confucian scholar-official" often presented in popular literature. If the goal of the Sung founders – T'ai-tsu, T'ai-tsung, and

¹⁷² Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien*, pp. 704–9.

¹⁷³ Ronald C. Egan, *Word, image, and deed in the life of Su Shi* (Cambridge, MA, 1994), pp. 208–9.

¹⁷⁴ HCP (1979) 250, p. 6102. ¹⁷⁵ SS (1977) 472, p. 13724.

Chen-tsung – was to create a new, broad-based civil service that would support their monarchy, their success was quick and long-lasting. It may stretch the point to label this achievement as “representative” government, but the result, at least initially, was certainly inclusive rather than exclusive. The *shih ta-fu* encompassed a wide range of social classes, educational levels, professional training, and religious and intellectual orientation. Yes, the “literati” were officials, important and vital. But so also was the semiliterate accountant who kept the books in a provincial wine monopoly office, the merchant who purchased an office to evade taxes, the army officer who slaughtered Tibetans on the northwest frontier. Even the deities were officials, although their personnel management required special expertise and a certain latitude with regulations. Support for the monarchy and its policies was the common denominator that determined initial inclusion and eventual career advancement. The greatest reward for good service was the ability to perpetuate that service through exercise of *yin* privilege. At any given moment, a majority of officials owed their own inclusion in the system to the prior good service of their elder relatives.

A common thread that connected the lives of Sung officials was their participation, both as exploiters and as victims, in the economic expansion during the Northern Sung and its contraction in the Southern Sung. The extensive downtime between appointments, the large core families to support, and the broad interface between government office and economic opportunity lured and forced many Sung officials and their families into business ventures. Once again, the gamut is startling. In the mid-eleventh century, Ssu-ma Kuang advocated stricter gender separation because poorer *shih ta-fu* families were forced to sell their daughters as concubines and maids.¹⁷⁶ Slightly later, Ho Chih-chung's (1044–1117) daily income from his K'ai-feng rental property equaled his monthly salary as chief counselor.¹⁷⁷ Many officials led double lives as businessmen. Chu Hsi's family had a printing business, and his letters reveal him using his students and associates to deliver orders and collect bills.¹⁷⁸ Despite the condemnation of commerce in Confucian texts, such activity was open and accepted.¹⁷⁹ The famous painting of Sung urban life known as *Going up the river during the Spring Festival (Ch'ing-ming shang-ho t'u)* shows retail shops

¹⁷⁶ See Patricia Buckley Ebrey, “Women, money, and class: Ssu-ma Kuang and Sung Neo-Confucian views on women,” in Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Women and family in Chinese history* (London and New York, 2003), pp. 10–38, esp. 14–15, 22.

¹⁷⁷ Tung Fen, *Hsien-yen ch'ang-t'an* (TSCC ed.), pp. 1a–b; Heng, *Cities of aristocrats and bureaucrats*, p. 102.

¹⁷⁸ Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh), *Chu Hsi: New studies* (Honolulu, 1989), pp. 77–81.

¹⁷⁹ See Ch'üan Han-sheng's classic article “Sung-tai kuan-li te ssu-ying shang-yeh,” in Ch'üan Han-sheng, *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 3 vols. (Hong Kong, 1976), Volume 2, pp. 1–74; also Ma, *Commercial development and urban change in Sung China*, pp. 129–34.

with signs openly advertising the official status of their owners, for example the drugstore of "Imperial Defense Commissioner Chou."¹⁸⁰

This diversity also extended to religious life. Without addressing the fractious issue of whether Confucianism was a religion or not, in their private and public lives Sung officials manifested a spectrum of religious belief and practice commensurate with their varied backgrounds. Study of the classic Confucian texts was widespread and almost universally honored as a worthy enterprise and directly related to government employment and practice. But many subsequent pillars of the "Confucian" establishment, such as Fan Chung-yen, Wang An-shih, Su Shih, and Chu Hsi, had extensive knowledge of Buddhism, and Buddhism influenced their thinking on social and governmental issues.¹⁸¹ Hung Mai's *I-chien chih* (*Record of the listener*), a large twelfth-century collection of popular narratives, reveals an officialdom, especially in the lower ranks, whose religious beliefs and practices are identical to those of the general population whence they once had come.¹⁸²

THE SUNG MONARCHY

The emperor

The Sung monarchy was unique in the long history of Chinese imperial rule. Although emperors ruled China from 221 BC until 1911, the people, the institutions, the rituals, and the protocols that comprised the totality of the Chinese monarchy varied enormously over the course of that history. The monarchy was not simply the emperor. It also included his immediate and extended family; the imperial clan; the eunuch (*huan-kuan*) and female palace bureaucracy; and those elements of the regular bureaucratic establishment, mainly the Institute of Academicians (*Hsüeh-shih yüan*), that were under the emperor's direct control. In historical terms, none of these components of the Sung monarchy was new, but their size, their organization, their relationships with each other, and their interface with the outside world gave a distinctive function and feel to the Sung monarchy that distinguish it from any other in Chinese history. Once again, the genius of Sung was not to invent something new but to bring new order and structure to existing institutions.

¹⁸⁰ Heng, *Cities of aristocrats and bureaucrats*, p. 100, Fig. 27.

¹⁸¹ See Mark R. Halperin, *Out of the cloister: Literati perspectives on Buddhism in Sung China, 960-1279* (Cambridge, MA, 2006).

¹⁸² For an excellent synopsis of Sung religious and social life, based on the narratives in the *I-chien chih*, see Chang Fu-jui, "Le Yi Kien Tche et la société des Song," *Journal asiatique* 256 (1968), pp. 55-92. See also Valerie Hansen, *Changing gods in medieval China, 1127-1276* (Princeton, 1990); and Edward L. Davis, *Society and the supernatural in Song China* (Honolulu, 2001).

The monarchy was among the most successful of Sung institutions and a major source of the dynasty's continuity and stability. A few statistics reveal the source and depth of this stability. From 960 through 1276, there were fifteen Sung emperors. All ruled as adults. The average length of reign was twenty-two years. The longest was that of Jen-tsung, who ascended at age thirteen and reigned for forty-two years (1022–63), then Li-tsung at forty-one years (1224–64). The shortest reign was the unfortunate Ch'in-tsung (r. 1125–7), on the throne little more than a year before the Jurchen captured him in 1127. The average age of the Sung emperors at ascension was twenty-six; their average age at death was fifty-two. Che-tsung (r. 1085–1100) was the youngest when he ascended the throne at age ten; Kuang-tsung (r. 1189–94) the oldest at forty-three.¹⁸³ There were also nine regencies, periods when empresses ruled on behalf of, or in conjunction with, young emperors. Many of these regencies were for short periods of time. Two, however, the rules of Empress Liu (969–1033) from 1022 to 1033 and of Empress Kao (1028–93) from 1085 to 1093, lent stability to the monarchy during important periods of political growth and tension.

On average then, and in modern terms, the Sung monarchs were young or middle-aged adults who occupied their thrones for relatively long periods of time. Unlike in other dynasties, there were no baby emperors, no emperors poisoned by eunuchs, no recluse emperors, and none deposed or dominated by their affinal relatives. The Sung emperors were not figureheads but active monarchs fully engaged in the performance of their duties as heads of state. With the probable exceptions of Ying-tsung (r. 1063–7) and Kuang-tsung, they were generally in good health and worked long hours. Emperor Kao-tsung's day, for example, began at dawn with the morning audience, after which he read the memorials that had been submitted at audience that day. In the afternoon, he read history, especially the *Tso Chuan* (*Chronicles of Tso*), which he perused continuously, completing the book every twenty-four days, then beginning anew. In late afternoon, he practiced calligraphy and archery. After dinner, he read memorials that reached him via non-audience channels. He retired during the second watch, between nine and eleven o'clock. Elsewhere, Kao-tsung relates that he often spent all day, even holidays, reading memorials.¹⁸⁴ How many is not certain, but already in 999, at the beginning of his reign, Chen-tsung complained that he was reading a hundred memorials per day and asked his ministers to screen them for him.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ For these statistics, see Chu Jui-hsi, *Sung-tai*, in *Chung-kuo cheng-chih chib-tu t'ung-shih*, ed. Pai Kang (Peking, 1996), Volume 6, p. 14.

¹⁸⁴ *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 1, pp. 31–2; *Yao-lu* (1988) 65, p. 1099; 98, p. 1619.

¹⁸⁵ *HCP* (1979) 44, p. 940; *SHY* (1966) *ti-hsi* 9, p. 4b.

A Sung emperor carried a number of names and titles over the course of his life and death. After ascension, a committee of senior officials determined a formal honorific title. For example, in 978, two years after his ascension, T'ai-tsung was termed "In Accord with Fortune and in Unity with Heaven, the Sagacious and Enlightened, Civil and Martial August Sovereign" (*Ying-yün t'ung-t'ien sheng-ming wen-wu huang-ti*).¹⁸⁶ These titles – always carefully formulated to reflect contemporary political and cultural policy – ended with the phrase *Huang-ti*, the formal title of Chinese monarchs since 221 BC. *Huang-ti* and *T'ien-tzu* (Son of Heaven) were the most usual titles on the formal seals of Sung emperors.¹⁸⁷ During his reign, contemporary documents referred to a sitting emperor through euphemisms and circumlocutions such as the "ruler of men," "the Sage," "the Highest," or "Heaven."

After his death, another committee determined two further titles. The posthumous honorific was a long, formal title that also ended in *Huang-ti*. The temple title, for use in the imperial ancestral temple, was a two-graph phrase that ended with the graph *tsung* (ancestor). A first graph summarized his personality and the nature of the deceased ruler's achievement. Sung emperors are known to subsequent history and to English readers by these temple titles, thus Chen-tsung (the Perfected Ancestor), Jen-tsung (the Benevolent Ancestor), Kao-tsung (the Lofty Ancestor).¹⁸⁸ The tomb of each emperor also received its own name, and subsequent writers sometimes referred to a deceased emperor by the name of his tomb. The tombs of seven Northern Sung emperors are located at Kung-hsien in modern Ho-nan. The tombs of the Southern Sung emperors are at Shao-hsing in modern Chekiang.¹⁸⁹ Twenty-seven Sung-era portraits of all the emperors and selected empresses survive in the collection of the National Palace Museum (*Ku-kung po-wu-kuan*) in Taipei. These are large formal portraits probably originally intended not for public display but for private ritual adoration within the palace. Similar in size and format, these Sung portraits show remarkable variation in realistic physical features such as body size and demeanor, facial features, and skin tone. In this

¹⁸⁶ SS (1977) 4, p. 59; on these titles, see *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 3, p. 91.

¹⁸⁷ Chao, *Ch'ao-yeh lei-yao*, 1, p. 28. For the primary sources on imperial seals, see SHY (1966) *yü-fu* 6, pp. 1a–13a.

¹⁸⁸ For capsule biographies, including all formal and informal names, of each Sung emperor and empress, see Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien*, pp. 1–11.

¹⁸⁹ For an extensive archaeological report on the Northern Sung tombs, see Honan sheng wen-wu k'ao-ku yen-chiu so, ed., *Pei-Sung huang-ling* (Cheng-chou, 1997), with an English abstract. This site also contains tombs of the Sung empresses and members of the imperial clan. Only one tomb has been systematically excavated. The Southern Sung tombs were extensively looted and dismantled in 1278; for a collection of sources on this event, see Wan Ssu-t'ung, *Nan-Sung liu-ling i-shih* (Taipei, 1968).

way, they differ from the imperial portraits of later dynasties, which are usually highly stylized.¹⁹⁰

The emperor was first and foremost the primary religious officer of the Sung state. His function in this capacity was unique and irreplaceable. He was the principal officiant at a series of rituals that regulated time; offered sacrifices to deities; paid homage to stars, mountains, and rivers; and worshipped ancestors.¹⁹¹ The greatest of these was the triennial "suburban sacrifice" during which the emperor offered sacrifices to Heaven and other deities at a ritual altar complex south of the capital city. The ritual itself was a lavish display of pomp and power that reinforced the legitimacy of the dynasty, and served as occasion for the emperor to reward his officials with large supplements to salary and dispensations of *yin* privilege. Such grants, extending even to soldiers, clerks, and artisans, consumed 10 percent of the state budget in years when the ritual was performed.¹⁹² The Sung dynasty was also a high point in Chinese ideas concerning the "Hall of Light" (*Ming-t'ang*), a ritual building in which a version of the sacrifices to Heaven was combined with rituals to ensure the proper progression of the seasons. The performances were especially prevalent in Southern Sung and continued until the very end of the dynasty.¹⁹³ The emperor also performed an upscale version of the ubiquitous Chinese ancestral rites at which regular sacrifices were offered to statues and portraits of his imperial predecessors (*tsu-tsung*).¹⁹⁴

In addition to his religious and ritual duties, the emperor was also the political head of state. In theory, and judged from a modern Western perspective,

¹⁹⁰ For the portraits, see Patricia Buckley Ebrey, "The ritual context of Sung Imperial Portraiture," in *Arts of the Sung and Yüan: Ritual, ethnicity, and style in painting*, ed. Cary Y. Liu and Dora C. Y. Ching (Princeton, 1999), pp. 68–93; also Fong Wen C. and James C. Y. Watt, *Possessing the past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei* (New York, 1996), pp. 141–5. For color reproductions of all the portraits, see Chao Heng-t'í, *Ta-Sung huang-ti huang-hou hsiang-chi* (Taipei, 1971).

¹⁹¹ There is an enormous body of surviving documentation on Sung state ritual, including the entire ritual code of 1111, Cheng Chü-chung et al., eds., *Cheng-ho wu-li hsin-i* (SKCS ed.) in 220 chapters; the sixty-two chapters in the "li" section of the *SHY* (1966); also *SS* (1977) 89–125, pp. 2421–3046; and Anonymous, *Sung ta chao-ling chi*, 116–47, pp. 393–544; see also the extensive notes in *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 2–3, pp. 66–102. The subject, however, has drawn little attention from either Chinese or Western scholars. For T'ang antecedents, see Howard J. Wechsler, *Offerings of jade and silk: Ritual and symbol in the legitimation of the T'ang dynasty* (New Haven, 1985).

¹⁹² For primary sources, see *SHY* (1966) *li* 1–3, 25, and 28; for a detailed list of early Sung grant amounts, see *SHY* (1966) *li* 25, pp. 1a–14b. The Southern Sung ceremony is described in detail in Jacques Gernet, *Daily life in China on the eve of the Mongol invasion, 1250–1276*, trans. H. M. Wright (Stanford, 1962), pp. 200–5.

¹⁹³ See *SHY* (1966) *li* 24, pp. 1a–110b; and the excellent overview, James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien), "The Sung emperors and the Ming-t'ang or Hall of enlightenment," in *Études Song: Sung studies in memoriam Étienne Balazs*, ed. Françoise Aubin (Paris, 1973), pp. 45–58.

¹⁹⁴ See Patricia Buckley Ebrey, "Portrait sculptures in imperial ancestral rites in Song China," *T'oung-pao* 83 No. 1 (1997), pp. 42–92; see Halperin, *Out of the cloister*, pp. 148–56 for the Buddhist context of these rites.

his powers appear virtually unlimited. In practice, however, other elements within the monarchy, and especially the bureaucratic protocols that determined his relationship with the rest of Sung government, often limited his ability to exercise his theoretical powers. The political powers of the Sung monarch may be divided into four categories for convenience of presentation: legal, personnel administration, military, and financial.

The emperor was the ultimate legislative and judicial officer of the state. Major initiatives were undertaken and decisions issued in his name and often with his personal involvement. The "imperial will" was the basis for all subsequent lower-level administrative action. Expressions of the imperial will formed the basis for legal statutes, and compilations of such statutes were issued in his name. He was the final legal authority and often personally ruled on legal cases that involved important officials or on cases that had reached the apex of the appeals process.¹⁹⁵ He could intervene at any stage of a legal proceeding and resolve the matter at his discretion. He could also bypass lower-level judicial authority and order a so-called "mandated trial" (*chao-yü*), essentially an investigation and trial initiated on imperial authority.¹⁹⁶ In all such matters, the emperor worked in conjunction with the relevant legal and judicial organs of state. But he was the final authority.

The emperor also personally made all appointments and personnel decisions concerning top officials. Such officials, known collectively as ministers-in-attendance, had personal-rank grades of eleven or above. They numbered several dozen and included chief councilors and other members of the State Council, censors, and Han-lin academicians (*Han-lin hsüeh-shih*). This authority also extended to the appointment of empresses and heirs apparent, whose civil service grades were even higher than those for ministers-in-attendance. On the one hand, in 1012, Chen-tsung, against the advice of his councilors, appointed the daughter of a silversmith as empress, a woman subsequently known as Empress Liu. On the other hand, in 1033, Jen-tsung dismissed Empress Kuo (whom Empress Liu had forced the young emperor to marry during her regency) from her position as empress, once again, over the strong objections of senior advisers, such as Fan Chung-yen, whom he also dismissed

¹⁹⁵ See, for example, Charles Hartman, "The inquisition against Su Shih: His sentence as an example of Sung legal practice," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113 No. 2 (1993), pp. 228-43.

¹⁹⁶ On mandated trials, see Tai Chien-kuo, "Sung-tai chao-yü chih-tu shu-lun," *Yüeh Fei yen-chiu* 4 (1996), pp. 489-505; and Chu, *Sung-tai*, pp. 476-9. In practice, such trials were usually directed at high-level official malfeasance, which fell outside the purview of the routine court system. For an excellent introduction to Sung law, with emphasis on the legal position of the emperor, see Brian E. McKnight, "From statute to precedent: An introduction to Sung law and its transformation," in *Law and the state in traditional East Asia: Six studies on the sources of East Asian law*, ed. Brian E. McKnight (Honolulu, 1987), pp. 111-31.

for opposing his wishes on the matter.¹⁹⁷ Emperors jealously guarded their prerogatives in making such senior appointments. In 1061, Jen-tsung dismissed four censors for suggesting that several eunuchs had engineered the appointment of the Assistant Commissioner of Military Affairs – a State Council position – because these eunuchs had marriage ties to the appointee. Jen-tsung determined that the man was indeed related to the eunuchs, dismissed him, then also dismissed the four censors with the statement, “I make all appointments to the Council. How could I suffer to accept such advice from eunuchs!”¹⁹⁸ Theoretically, the emperor had authority to “review” (*yin-tui*, literally “invite for audience”) any appointment or promotion. In 1054, for example, Jen-tsung denied promotions for two officials because they had previously been convicted of minor bureaucratic violations. When Ou-yang Hsiu suggested that this rejection was unwarranted, he was dismissed from his post on the ground that his demurral contested the emperor’s ultimate right of personnel review.¹⁹⁹

The emperor was also the commander-in-chief. T’ai-tsu and T’ai-tsung were actual warriors who fought personally in combat. Although subsequent emperors rarely took the field against opponents, they created bureaucratic structures that severely restricted the independent authority of military commanders. The Sung began with a military coup, and subsequent emperors took pains to insure the same did not happen, in reverse, against them. Only the emperor had the authority to mobilize troops for war. Control of troop movements was centered in the Military Affairs Commission, but even this agency needed an imperial edict to move troops. Northern Sung emperors guarded this authority and were reluctant to share it, even with chief councilors. During the chaotic years of the early Southern Sung when communication with the crown was difficult, military commanders often took independent action. The famous struggle between Emperor Kao-tsung and the “martyred general” Yüeh Fei (1103–42) is best understood in this light. Kao-tsung bypassed normal administrative channels and sent letters directly to Yüeh Fei in the field. Filled with detailed instructions on strategy, logistics, and operations, the surviving letters, if genuine, show the emperor’s resolve to re-exert his predecessors’ tight control over the military.²⁰⁰ Kao-tsung executed Yüeh Fei

¹⁹⁷ HCP (1979) 113, pp. 2648 ff.; Lau Nap-yin (Liu Li-yen) and Huang Kuan-chung, “Founding and consolidation of the Sung dynasty,” in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 5, Part 1: *The Sung dynasty and its precursors*, 907–1279, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge and New York, 2009), pp. 277–8; and Michael Charles McGrath, “The reigns of Jen-tsung (1022–1063) and Ying-tsung (1063–1067),” in *ibid.*, pp. 292–3.

¹⁹⁸ HCP (1979) 193, pp. 4666–7; SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 65, pp. 21b–22a.

¹⁹⁹ HCP (1979) 176, pp. 4268–9; also Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu: An eleventh-century Neo-Confucianist*, pp. 68–9.

²⁰⁰ For these letters, see Yüeh K’o, *O-kuo chin-t’o ts’ui-pien hsü-pien chiao-chu*, ed. Wang Tseng-yü (Peking, 1989), pp. 1–48; also Peter Allan Lorge, “Song Gaozong’s letters to Yue Fei,” *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies* 30 (2000), pp. 169–73.

because Yüeh was reluctant to acknowledge the emperor's ultimate authority over Yüeh's troops. A year later, a fellow general, Han Shih-chung (1089–1151), offered to donate three years' revenue from his private landholdings to support army troops. Kao-tsung declined, and remarked to Chief Councilor Ch'in Kuei that the T'ang dynasty had lost control of the provinces by not exercising early, firm control over its military governors. "I have now brought military authority back under court control. If I wish to switch a general, he follows my order, no differently than do the civil officials."²⁰¹

The emperor was also the chief financial officer of the state. The question of what revenues belonged personally to the emperor and what belonged to the state was complex and contentious. There was a constant struggle between the desire of the monarchy to control both its personal and state finances and the needs of the State Council for accurate financial information to support policy formulation and implementation. For example, representatives of the State Finance Commission (*San-ssu*), or its post-1082 successor, the Ministry of Revenue (*Hu-pu*), were never members of the State Council. On the one hand, early in Chen-tsung's reign the Finance Commission was ordered to prepare "accounting registers" (*k'uai-chi lu*) that included nationwide data on population, revenues, and expenditures, and this practice continued until the end of the dynasty.²⁰² Information from the accounting registers was used to fix tax quotas for each provincial jurisdiction. On the other hand, the Palace East Gate Bureau (*Nei tung-men ssu*), the emperor's eunuch-staffed financial-affairs office, kept its own books of the emperor's personal finances. And an edict of 1003 threatened staff with decapitation if they revealed the numbers to the outside bureaucracy.²⁰³ In 1069, the emperor personally controlled 23 percent of total government income and expenditure.²⁰⁴ Although the crown lost some measure of control over state finance during the late Northern Sung, Emperor Kao-tsung was able to restore the system, such that by 1161 over half of state income entered the emperor's Palace Storehouse (*Nei-tsang k'u*).²⁰⁵ The bulk of this money was spent on legitimate national expenses, such as military defense or disaster relief, but at the discretion of the emperor.

²⁰¹ *Yao-lu* (1988) 147, p. 2372.

²⁰² For summaries of these registers, see *Yü-hai* (1988) 185, pp. 16b–30a; also Philip Yuen-ko Fu (Fu Yüan-kuo), "K'uai-chi lu and other special reports in the Sung dynasty," *Chung Chi hsiieh-pao* 8 No. 2 (1969), pp. 78–90; and Christian Lamouroux (Lan Keli), *Fiscalité, comptes publics et politiques financières dans la Chine des Song: Le chapitre 179 du Songsbi* (Paris, 2003).

²⁰³ *SHY* (1966) *shih-buo* 51, p. 1b; for this agency, which also handled the emperor's secret correspondence, see *SHY* (1966) *chih-kuan* 36, pp. 28a–30a.

²⁰⁴ Hartwell, "Imperial treasuries," p. 60.

²⁰⁵ *Yao-lu* (1988) 193, p. 3240; 199, p. 3355; see also Hartwell, "Imperial treasuries," pp. 72–5; and Lau Nap-yin (Liu Li-yen), "The absolutist reign of Sung Hsiao-tsung" (diss., Princeton University, 1986), pp. 74–7.

The female monarchy

A simple overview of the geography of its headquarters, the Great Inner (*Ta-nei*), or imperial city, provides a sense of the size and administrative scope of the Sung monarchy. This was a rectangular-shaped enclave, originally a modest 1.7 miles around, located in the northeast of the capital city, K'ai-feng.²⁰⁶ Two avenues bisected the area in each direction and separated the compound into four quadrants, each of which had its own inner walls and gates. The southwest quadrant was the administrative center of the court (*ch'ao-t'ing*), meaning not the emperor, but the Secretariat–Chancellery and the Military Affairs Commission, in essence the offices of the State Council. Behind these offices was the Hall of Civil Virtue (*Wen-te tien*), the main hall used for the outer audience. Ritual structures, especially the Hall of Light, occupied most of the southeast quadrant. The northwest quadrant contained a number of halls, pavilions, and gardens and was the actual residence of the emperor and of most members of the immediate royal family. The northeast quadrant was the administrative nerve center of the monarchy. It contained secretarial and financial services such as the Palace East Gate Bureau and the Institute of Academicians. The Palace Eunuch Service (*Ju-nei nei-shih sheng*) and the female-staffed Palace Domestic Service (*Nei-sheng, Shang-shu nei-sheng*), as well as the palace of the heir apparent (*tung-kung*) and weapons storage, were also located in this area.²⁰⁷

Women and eunuchs filled a majority of positions that administered the monarchy. Unlike other dynasties, however, the Sung monarchs devised mechanisms to control these groups and to prevent them from dominating either the sovereign personally or the monarchy as an institution. For both groups, the Sung created bureaucratic structures that, although distinct in terminology, paralleled those for male officials. Like other officials, palace women and eunuchs held graded bureaucratic positions, drew salaries, were promoted, and retired. The Sung monarchs placed ultimate control over the eunuchs in

²⁰⁶ For primary texts on the imperial city, see SHY (1966) *fang-yü* 1, pp. 2b–7a. For an excellent overview of both the Northern and the Southern Sung capitals, see Heng, *Cities of aristocrats and bureaucrats*, pp. 97–182. For an extensive textual-based study of Song-era K'ai-feng, see Chou Pao-chu, *Sung-tai tung-ching yen-chiu* (K'ai-feng, 1992).

²⁰⁷ This description is based on a map of the Northern Sung imperial city in the Yüan-period (1260–1368) encyclopedia *Shih-lin kuang-chi* (Expanded compilation of myriad matters). For a convenient reproduction, see Wen C. Fong, *Beyond representation: Chinese painting and calligraphy, 8th–14th Century* (New York, 1992), p. 176. This map, clearly a later reconstruction, depicts the area as it was configured in the late Northern Sung. There has never been an archaeological investigation of the area. For a careful reconstruction based on textual evidence, see Fu Hsi-nien, "Shan-shi sheng Fan-shih hsien Yen-shan ssu nan-tien Chin-tai pi-hua chung so hui chien-chu te ch'u-pu fen-his," in Fu Hsi-nien, *Fu Hsi-nien chien-chu shih lun-wen chi* (Peking, 1998), pp. 282–313, esp. 294–302.

the hands of the State Council. The Military Affairs Commission processed appointments to the Palace Eunuch Service; chief councilors could also intervene to block eunuch appointments or to punish errant behavior.²⁰⁸ In addition, the elaborate safeguards on document processing and verification made it difficult for eunuchs to manipulate the imperial paper flow.²⁰⁹

The “female monarchy” was among the most remarkable and distinctive aspects of the Sung monarchy.²¹⁰ It comprised two distinct but related groups. First were women in the imperial harem (*bou-kung*) – the dowager empress (*huang t'ai-bou*), the reigning empress, imperial consorts, and minor wives – as well as their daughters, the imperial princesses. Second was a professional female bureaucracy that supervised its own affairs and oversaw many aspects of palace life. Both groups contained women from all social strata. Imperial consorts taken from outside the palace were always from socially prominent families, but those promoted into the imperial harem from the ranks of the female bureaucracy might just as well come from humble backgrounds. Like other major Sung institutions, the Palace Domestic Service dates from the reign of Chen-tsung. Organized in 1022 into six ministries with a plethora of subdivisions, it contained a total of 282 billeted positions. These six ministries were General Affairs, Ceremonies, Wardrobe, Food Service, House-keeping, and Workshop Service.²¹¹ Although the ministries were directed primarily toward providing services for the empress and consorts, they also shared duties with the eunuchs in providing the same services to the emperor. These included the manufacture and organization of imperial clothing and regalia, the upkeep of the imperial apartments, the preparation and serving of food, and security and access control. By the mid-eleventh century, the Palace Domestic Service employed about 2,500 women. The Ministry of General Affairs co-ordinated the other ministries and maintained a centralized secretariat and record-keeping service.

In 1113, Emperor Hui-tsung, as a continuation of the Yüan-feng reforms of 1082, reorganized the Palace Domestic Service to mirror the organization of external government. The traditional six inner ministries of 1022 were reorganized into six divisions that corresponded to the external Six Ministries

²⁰⁸ *SS* (1977) 162, p. 3797; *HCP* (1979) 176, pp. 4251–2; *SS* (1977) 468, p. 13657.

²⁰⁹ For an excellent discussion of court eunuchs with a long list of their duties, see *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 10, pp. 210–11.

²¹⁰ For the primary texts, see *SHY* (1966) *bou-chi* 4, pp. 1a–29b; also Priscilla Ching Chung, *Palace women in the Northern Sung*, 960–1126 (Leiden, 1981). For the Southern Sung, see Lee Hui-shu, “The domain of Empress Yang (1162–1233): Art, gender, and politics at the Southern Sung court” (diss., Yale University, 1994). Also useful is the chronological survey of the female monarchy in Huang Chin-chün, *Liang Sung bou-fei shih-chi pien-nien* (Chengtu, 1997).

²¹¹ For a detailed description, see Chung, *Palace women*, pp. 7–18, 91–102; Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien*, pp. 7–25, 34–5.

of the Department of State Affairs, and the top supervisory positions were recast as “inner councilors” (*nei-tsai*). As justification for this move, Hui-tsung’s edict declared that this new structure would facilitate “the disposition of matters submitted to the throne from the external Six Ministries.”²¹² This phrasing raises the interesting question whether, in addition to processing their own internal paperwork, the women also processed external documents coming to and from the emperor. There are tantalizing indications that this was probably the case. Already in 1041, the Records Office (*Ssu-chi*) and the Communications Office (*Ssu-yen*), the general-affairs units charged with secretarial functions, employed 120 women.²¹³ Li Hsin-ch’uan states directly that beginning under Emperor Hui-tsung palace women sometimes wrote imperial edicts, and the biography of Empress Cheng (1082–1133), who became Hui-tsung’s empress in the year 1111, states that the emperor admired her ability to compose official documents.²¹⁴ Writing in the mid-1230s, the literati official Wu Yung (b. 1181, *chin-shih* 1208) lamented that “nefarious concubines and duplicitous females” compose documents that purport to represent the intentions of the emperor.²¹⁵

The issue is not primarily whether female secretaries did or did not ghost-write for the emperor (although it appears they often did) but rather the contribution of women to the political stability and the intensely literate, cultured character of the Sung monarchy. The Sung regency differed from the regencies of the Eastern Han period (25–220), during which powerful families of the emperor’s consorts usurped imperial authority. Essentially a new Chinese institution, the first Sung regency, that of Empress Liu from 1022 to 1033, set the pattern for those that followed.²¹⁶ Unlike the Han empresses, Empress Liu – and with her many other Sung empresses, consorts, and palace women – came from families without powerful political connections. This lack of access to an external power base forced Empress Liu to rely on female allies within the palace and to forge alliances with male court officials, especially with the chief councilors. The Sung regents did not draw external power into the vacuum that the lack of an emperor had created, but forged working coalitions of male court officials, other female power brokers within the palace, and eunuchs. Because each partner had a specific role to play, these coalitions perpetuated and even strengthened existing political structures. Alliances between Sung

²¹² Anonymous, *Sung ta chao-ling chi* 21, pp. 101–5; SHY (1966) *hou-chi* 4, pp. 10b–11a.

²¹³ See the memorial of Sun Mien (996–1066) in Chao Ju-yü, *Sung-ch’ao chu-ch’ien tsou-i* (1186; Shanghai, 1999) 29, pp. 275–7.

²¹⁴ *Ch’ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) i 11, p. 671; SS (1977) 243, p. 8639.

²¹⁵ Wu Yung, *Ho-lin chi* (SKCS ed.) 19, p. 5a.

²¹⁶ For an excellent study, see John W. Chaffee, “The rise and regency of Empress Liu (969–1033),” *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies* 31 (2001), pp. 1–25.

regents as well as empress dowagers and selected chief councilors became a feature of Sung court politics. But, at least in Northern Sung, these alliances were based on mutual political interests, not on family connections. Sung historians tended to praise these alliances when they agreed with the politics – Ssu-ma Kuang and Empress Kao – and to condemn them when they did not – Shih Mi-yüan (1164–1233) and Empress Yang (1162–1232). But the institutional base for such alliances remained similar.

Another factor contributing to the special nature of Sung regencies was the strong connection between female palace officials and the Sung military establishment. Four of the five women who served as regents during the Northern Sung came from military families, as did the principal consorts of all nine Northern Sung emperors.²¹⁷ This feature of the Sung monarchy – its extensive intermarriage with military families – goes back to T'ai-tsu himself, who offered his fellow generals wealth, security, and marriage ties to his family in exchange for their support of the fledgling dynasty. And this policy of intermarriage between the imperial clan and the military establishment continued at least into the Southern Sung.²¹⁸ On the one hand, the rigid separation of civil and military functions in the Northern Sung meant that regents, even those from powerful military families, had little access to *political* power, which was largely in the hands of literati officials. On the other hand, as high-ranking graded officials, the female bureaucrats of the Palace Domestic Service enjoyed the same *yin* privileges to appoint relatives to office as did male officials. In short, military families whose daughters did well in the palace service reaped many of the same benefits as did literati families whose sons did well in the *chin-shih* examinations. Literati writers constantly bemoan the excess of “military officials” (*wu-kuan*) created in this way, but this system of palace organization and the female bureaucrats’ role in it was a key factor in the stability of the Sung monarchy.

Senior palace women, sometimes in alliance with a chief councilor, also played key roles in deciding imperial successions. Seven emperors were not biological sons of their immediate predecessor (T'ai-tsung, Ying-tsung, Hui-tsung, Kao-tsung, Hsiao-tsung, Li-tsung, and Tu-tsung). Of the remainder, only two, Shen-tsung and Ch'in-tsung, were the eldest sons of their predecessors. The image, then, of a smooth imperial succession from father to eldest son

²¹⁷ Chung, *Palace women*, pp. 69–77. Chung emphasizes that literati families seldom placed their daughters in palace service. Her study is based on ninety-two *Sung history* biographies of palace women. Only four were from literati families. These four were orphans consigned to the palace because their adoptive literati families were too poor to care for them (pp. 34–5).

²¹⁸ HCP (1979) 2, pp. 49–50; Worthy, “The founding of Sung China,” pp. 173–5; Chung, *Palace women*, pp. 25–6; John W. Chaffee, *Branches of heaven: A history of the imperial clan of Sung China* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), pp. 55–6, 163–5.

is atypical for Sung. Ideally, the reigning emperor decided who would become heir apparent. Chen-tsung, Jen-tsung, Hsiao-tsung, Kuang-tsung, and Tu-tsung were duly appointed heirs apparent a number of years before their predecessors' demise, and their ascensions to the throne were relatively smooth. For a variety of reasons, however, emperors were often reluctant to designate heirs, and many of these transitions appear to have been open questions. In two cases, there is strong evidence that dowager empresses, in consultation with inner and outer court officials, determined the succession. Tseng Pu's diary records in detail the deliberations during which the views of Dowager Empress Hsiang (1046–1101) prevailed over those of Chief Councilor Chang Tun (1035–1105) in determining the succession of Hui-tsung in the year 1100.²¹⁹ And, according to one version of the story, the opinion of Dowager Empress Wu (1115–97) was crucial to the choice of Ning-tsung in 1195.²²⁰ In 1085, the Shen-tsung–Che-tsung transition resulted in the regency of Empress Kao, and later sources accused her of engineering the choice of the ten-year-old child as a vehicle to obtain a period of regency for herself.²²¹ Finally, there is no doubt Empress Yang collaborated with Shih Mi-yüan to arrange the ascension of Li-tsung in 1224.²²²

In all these cases, the political circumstances and personalities of the participants were different. Yet a common thread that runs through many of the surviving accounts of imperial transitions is the collaborative – almost “corporate” – flavor of the decision process. Jen-tsung, for example, had no son, so his advisers suggested that he establish a school within the palace to train those clan boys who displayed imperial potential.²²³ The conversations in Tseng Pu's diary reveal a calm and businesslike discussion whose participants weighed the pros and cons of several possible candidates in 1100. Apparently, virtually any male member of the imperial clan was eligible to be emperor. For example, during the chaos of 1127 an obscure clansman named Chao Shu-hsiang raised

²¹⁹ HCP (1979) 520, pp. 12356–67, esp. 12365; Chaffee, *Branches of heaven*, pp. 95–6.

²²⁰ Yeh Shao-weng, *Ssu-ch'ao wen-chien lu*, ed. Shen She-lin and Feng Hui-min (c.1225; Peking, 1989), pp. 133–5; Chaffee, *Branches of heaven*, pp. 192–3. Traditional accounts credit the orchestration of the Kuang-tsung–Ning-tsung transition to Chief Councilor Chao Ju-yü (1140–96) with the assistance of Empress Wu in the palace. Yeh's account paints the opposite picture: the empress as guiding force who elicited the outside assistance of Councilor Chao. Li Hsin-ch'uan's detailed account of the selection of Hsiao-tsung as heir apparent also accords a major role to Empress Meng (1073–1135) and Empress Wu; see *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) i 1, pp. 495–514.

²²¹ Chu Pien, *Ch'ü-wei chiu-wen*, ed. K'ung Fan-li (Peking, 2002) 2, p. 103.

²²² Chaffee, *Branches of heaven*, pp. 202–5; Lee, “The domain of Empress Yang,” pp. 117–27; Richard L. Davis, *Court and family in Sung China, 960–1279: Bureaucratic success and kinship fortunes for the Shih of Ming-chou* (Durham, NC, 1986), pp. 95–105. For an excellent study of the role of the female monarchy in imperial successions, see Shinno Reiko, “Sōdai no kisaki to teishi ketteiken,” in *Yanagida Setsuko sensei koki kinen Chugoku no dentō shakai to kazoku*, ed. Ihara Hiroshi (Tōkyō, 1993), pp. 51–70.

²²³ HCP (1979) 195, pp. 4727–8; Chaffee, *Branches of heaven*, pp. 64–5.

a small army to fight the Jurchen. Apparently harboring his own imperial ambitions, he was reluctant to support Kao-tsung as emperor and was immediately arrested and executed.²²⁴ In 1131, Kao-tsung, himself without male issue, commanded that ten boys from a branch of the imperial clan so distant that they barely qualified as relatives be brought into the palace and raised as his potential successor. The group was educated, observed, and tested until eventually, in 1153, Kao-tsung finally declared the future Hsiao-tsung heir apparent.²²⁵

The monarchy as a cultural institution

Historical sources present the Institute of Academicians as the emperor's personal secretariat and think tank and, organizationally, a part of the monarchy.²²⁶ The academicians of the Institute composed the formal, important documents of imperial rule – notices of imperial appointments and promotions, amnesties, and foreign correspondence. Academicians might work from the emperor's personal draft (*tz'u-tou*), which a eunuch delivered to their office in the palace, or they might be summoned into his presence and receive his text verbally. Since their final copy was read aloud at morning audience, they worked at night. Five or six academicians rotated this night duty, with at least one being on call at all times. The enormous pressure for literary elegance and speed, along with the possibility of frequent access to the emperor, meant that only the most talented literati were considered for these appointments, which the emperor made personally. Half of all Sung chief councilors had served earlier in their careers as academicians.²²⁷ Literati sources present glowing accounts of evening camaraderie between emperor and academician, exchanging poems and leisurely conversing about the politics and issues of the day.²²⁸

No doubt such events occurred. But their frequency and impact on the relationship between the emperor and his senior court officials is open to

²²⁴ Yao-lu (1988) 4, p. 100; 6, p. 160; Li, *Chu-tzu yü-lei*, 127, p. 3057; Chaffee, *Branches of heaven*, p. 128.

²²⁵ Chaffee, *Branches of heaven*, pp. 179–81.

²²⁶ For the primary texts, see SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 6, pp. 46a–56b; SS (1977) 162, pp. 3811–12; also Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chib tz'u-tien*, pp. 41–5. The Institute of Academicians is different from the Han-lin Academy (*Han-lin yüan*). In the Sung, the Han-lin Academy belonged to the Palace Domestic Service and was divided into four subunits for astronomers, painters, calligraphers, and physicians. Except for a brief period under Hui-tsung, its members were not graded officials. Because the original T'ang dynasty Han-lin Academy contained imperial drafters as well as artists and technicians, members of the Institute of Academicians in the Sung carried titles as “Han-lin academicians.” The institute was even popularly known as the “Han-lin Academy,” although careful writers clearly distinguish the two agencies; see Yeh Meng-te, *Shih-lin yen-yü*, ed. Hou Chung-i (1136; Peking, 1984) 7, p. 96.

²²⁷ Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chib tz'u-tien*, introduction, p. 14.

²²⁸ Wu, *Ho-lin chi*, 19, p. 4a.

question.²²⁹ The imperial tutoring sessions known as the Classics Mat (*Ching-yen*) were more effective as a vehicle to convey informal literati sentiments to the emperor.²³⁰ Classics Mat sessions, which assumed their mature form in the mid-eleventh century, were tutoring sessions in which a group of senior officials read aloud, explicated, and answered the emperor's questions on classic and history texts. Usually the emperor chose the texts. The form and scope of the sessions varied considerably over the course of the dynasty. The most common pattern was to hold sessions every other day during a spring and an autumn semester that each lasted about three and a half months. The number of lecturers was never fixed and ranged from two in the beginning of the dynasty to a high of twenty-four in 1058.²³¹ Lecturers were chosen personally by the emperor from among his senior officials, retained their primary appointments, and were given supplementary titles, designating them as Classics Mat lecturers (*Ching-yen kuan*). Occasionally, a renowned "private scholar" with no official position was invited to attend. The lecturers met with the emperor as a group, although they rotated the lead responsibility to read the text and answer questions. Disagreement and discussion were permitted. Minutes were taken, and versions of these records occur frequently in Li T'ao's *Long draft*, especially during the Jen-tsung years.

These records reveal fascinating glimpses of how the texts of the Classics and history were read against the backdrop of contemporary politics. Literati opinion differed about the primary function of the sessions. Some, usually chief councilors anxious to control what the emperor read and heard, urged that the lecturers "stick to the text" and refrain from comment on current issues. Others argued that since the ultimate purpose of the sessions was to educate the emperor to be an effective ruler, one should "go beyond the text" to relate its message to contemporary problems. For example, in 1045 Ting Tu (990–1053) used a passage from the *Han-shu* (*Han history*) to warn Jen-tsung against Fan Chung-yen and the dangers of factionalism.²³² Much depended on the age

²²⁹ Hung Mai dates the decline in autonomy and stature of the traditional "Han-lin academician" from the mid-eleventh century; see Hung, *Jung-chai ssu-pi* 12, pp. 756–8; also Hung, *Jung-chai sui-pi* 9, p. 122.

²³⁰ For primary sources, see SHY (1966) *ch'ung-ju* 7, pp. 1a–38b; SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 6, pp. 56b–76a; SS (1977) 162, pp. 3813–16; also Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chib tz'u-tien*, pp. 45–6; see also the detailed article of Chu Jui-hsi, "Sung-ch'ao ching-yen chih-tu," in *Ti-erh-chieh Sung-shih hsüeh-shu yen-t'ao-hui lun-wen chi* (Proceedings of the second symposium on Sung history), ed. Ti-erh-chieh Sung-shih hsüeh-shu yen-t'ao-hui lun-wen chi mi-shu-ch'u (Taipei, 1996), pp. 229–65; and a brief article in English, Kwon Yon-ung, "The imperial lecture in Sung China," *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* (Seoul) 48 (1978), pp. 103–13.

²³¹ Ou-yang Hsiu, *Ou-yang wen-chung kung chi* (SPTK ed.) 91, p. 3a.

²³² HCP (1979) 154, p. 3746. At the following session two days later, the group was reading the *Book of poetry*. When the lecturers suggested a sensitive poem be omitted, Jen-tsung insisted that all Classics Mat texts be read in their entirety, "the good with the bad."

of the emperor and his relationship with individual lecturers. In 1086, Su Sung (1020–1101) used precedents drawn from the histories of the T'ang dynasty to illustrate “actions by rulers and ministers.” He related them to contemporary events and interjected his own opinions. Emperor Che-tsung was nine years old.²³³ Many of the texts read in the sessions were not the ancient Classics but compilations of Sung historical documents from earlier reign periods that were being combed for “precedents” to contemporary policy.

The Sung monarchy was also the country's premier cultural institution. Beginning with T'ai-tsung, but especially under Chen-tsung, the Sung monarchs realized the power of visual and literary culture to attract and hold the allegiance of the emerging literati class. The early Sung monarchs supported a wide array of compilation and printing projects, including editions of the Confucian classics, the Buddhist and Taoist canons, and encyclopedias.²³⁴ Performance of imperial rituals required the constant production of cultural objects – buildings, implements, texts, music, paintings, and regalia. By the turn of the eleventh century the four divisions that would later make up the Sung Han-lin Academy (astronomy, calligraphy, painting, and medicine) had already been established.²³⁵ Chen-tsung initiated a dynastic policy of using art to record and celebrated the political achievements of the ruling house. He recorded his own 1008 performance of the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices in elaborate documentary paintings executed as public murals and on handscrolls. He also began the custom of constructing a hall on the palace grounds to house the writings, calligraphy, and other cultural artifacts of his imperial predecessor. One for each emperor, these halls served as libraries, museums, and centers to promote the cultural leadership of the royal house. A surviving eleventh-century painting shows Chen-tsung leading senior officials on a 1007 viewing tour of a new book collection and a display of the assembled manuscripts of Emperor T'ai-tsung. Records indicate twenty subsequent imperial visits to the same hall between 1007 and 1061 for viewings, literary gatherings, and banquets.²³⁶

Both imperial patronage of the arts and imperial use of art to promote the monarchy's political goals reached their apogee in the late Northern Sung

²³³ SS (1977) 340, pp. 10865–6.

²³⁴ Poon Ming-sun, “Books and printing in the Sung dynasty” (diss., University of Chicago, 1979), pp. 117–27.

²³⁵ For primary sources on the Han-lin Academy, see SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 36, pp. 95a–108b; also Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien*, pp. 69–75; and Betty Ecke, “Emperor Hui Tsung, the artist” (diss., New York University, 1972), pp. 50–8.

²³⁶ *Yü-hai* (1988) 164, pp. 19a–20b. For the painting, see Cary Y. Liu (Cary Yee-Wei), “Sung dynasty painting of the T'ai-ch'ing-lou library hall: From historical commemoration to architectural renewal,” in *Arts of the Sung and Yüan: Ritual, ethnicity, and style in painting*, ed. Cary Y. Liu and Dora C. Y. Ching (Princeton, 1999), pp. 94–119.

under Emperor Hui-tsung. A sovereign noted for his own distinctive calligraphy and for a number of surviving paintings connected to him, Hui-tsung substantially increased the dynasty's commitment to painting. Under his reign, painters attached to the Han-lin Academy were recruited through examinations and became graded officials with rank and status similar to members of the regular bureaucracy. The Han-lin Academy produced large number of paintings for imperial use as official gifts and as historical records of auspicious occasions. Hui-tsung also expanded the monarchy's collection of past and contemporary painting and calligraphy. The catalogues of those collections, the *Hsüan-ho hua-p'u* (*The Hsüan-ho period register of paintings*) and the *Hsüan-ho shu-p'u* (*The Hsüan-ho period register of calligraphy*) both survive. Almost certainly compiled by eunuchs, these catalogues record the extensive involvement of imperial clan members in artistic pursuits.²³⁷

These Northern Sung traditions, which culminated with Hui-tsung, continued throughout the Southern Sung. Particularly important was the notion that a distinct imperial calligraphy, copied and propagated through stele inscriptions throughout the country, disseminated the emperor's authority and leadership. Although Kao-tsung repudiated Hui-tsung's distinct hand, he took equal pains to create his own style of imperial calligraphy and used it to reinforce the idea of a rebirth of Sung culture following the catastrophe of 1127.²³⁸ The cultural projects of the Sung monarchy combined the talents of all segments of the institution. As we have seen above, Sung biographies of imperial consorts, especially in the Southern Sung, stress their artistic ability. Not only Hui-tsung and Empress Cheng, but also Kao-tsung and Empress Wu, and Ning-tsung and Empress Yang, worked together on projects to enhance the dynasty's cultural profile.²³⁹ The delicacy and balance so characteristic of Southern Sung Academy painting is an eloquent testament to their influence. Lastly, the eunuchs administered and provided support for the

²³⁷ On Hui-tsung, see Maggie Bickford, "Emperor Huizong and the aesthetic of agency," *Archives of Asian Art* 53 (2002–3), pp. 71–104; also the conference volume edited by Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Maggie Bickford, *Emperor Huizong and late Northern Song China: The politics of culture and the culture of politics* (Cambridge, MA, 2006); also Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Accumulating culture: The collections of Emperor Huizong* (Seattle, 2008). For the monarchy's promotion of cultural involvement for members of the imperial clan, see Chaffee, *Branches of heaven*, pp. 49–53, 269–71.

²³⁸ See Julia K. Murray, "The role of art in the Southern Sung dynastic revival," *Bulletin of Sung-Yüan Studies* 18 (1986), pp. 41–59. For Southern Sung imperial calligraphy, see Fong, *Beyond representation*, pp. 224–42. For a general survey of Sung painting, see Richard M. Barnhart, "The Five dynasties and Song period," in *Three thousand years of Chinese painting*, ed. Yang Xin et al. (New Haven, 1997), pp. 87–137; also Susan E. Nelson, "Western scholarship on Song painting: The twentieth century. A draft bibliography, classified," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 30 (2000), pp. 175–97.

²³⁹ Lee Hui-shu, *Empresses, art, and agency in Song dynasty China* (Seattle, 2010) discusses the intersection of art and politics under Empress Liu, Empress Wu, and Empress Yang.

monarchy's cultural programs. They acquired and organized supplies, compiled catalogues and kept records, and furnished logistical support to members of the Han-lin Academy.

One must also emphasize the intellectual and religious diversity of the monarchy's support for cultural and religious institutions. The Sung emperors supported both Buddhist and Taoist organizations in return for church support of the monarchy and the state. The early Sung emperors, especially T'ai-tsung, reversed the anticlerical policies of the Later Chou dynasty and promoted the growth of Buddhist monasteries through imperial protection, land grants, and tax remissions. Buddhist monasteries were linked to the monarchy as places to pray for deceased soldiers, as sites locally to celebrate imperial birthdays and deathdays, and as repositories of imperial calligraphy and portraits. The state also used both Buddhist and Taoist institutions to funnel financial and spiritual aid to the population after natural disasters and warfare. Grants of money and land to monasteries were a significant government expense.²⁴⁰

It is difficult to learn much about the personal religious lives of the Sung monarchs – to distinguish public policy from private belief. But a fervent private commitment seems partially to underlie the intense public support for Taoism, especially under Emperors Chen-tsung and Hui-tsung. In his later years, Hui-tsung envisioned a state with dual and equal Confucian and Taoist underpinnings. In 1118, he established official government schools, teachers, and examinations in the Taoist classics. He also created an official interface between the civil service personal-rank system and the Taoist clergy in an effort to foster "Taoist officials" (*tao-kuan*).²⁴¹ There is strong evidence that such personal commitment to Taoism on the part of Sung emperors continued. In 1141, Emperor Kao-tsung was conferring with his Chief Councilor Ch'in Kuei on a proposal to discipline provincial clerks. The emperor demurred on the idea. In his personal life and as emperor he preferred to rule by being "limpid and still." His allusion was to *Lao-tzu*, chapter 45, and its famous

²⁴⁰ Halperin, *Out of the cloister*, pp. 112–48; Wong, "Government expenditures in Northern Sung China," pp. 125–7; see also Huang Chi-chiang, "Imperial rulership and Buddhism in early Northern Sung," in *Imperial rulership and cultural change in traditional China*, ed. Frederick P. Brandauer and Huang Chun-chieh (Seattle, 1994), pp. 144–87.

²⁴¹ Anonymous, *Sung ta chao-ling chi* 224, pp. 864–8; Yang, *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien chi-shih pen-mo* 127, pp. 5a–6a. For state patronage of Taoist education, see Chao Shin-yi, "Daoist examinations and Daoist schools during the Northern Song dynasty," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 31 (2003), pp. 1–37. For Taoism under Emperor Chen-tsung, see Suzanne Elizabeth Cahill, "Taoism at the Sung court: The heavenly text affair of 1008," *Bulletin of Sung-Yüan Studies* 16 (1981), pp. 23–44. For Hui-tsung's Taoism and its specific links to art patronage, see Patricia Buckley Ebrey, "Taoism and art at the court of Song Huizong," in *Taoism and the arts of China*, ed. Stephen Little and Shawn Eichman (Chicago and Berkeley, 2000), pp. 95–111.

equation of Taoist perfection and political tranquility: "be limpid and still and the people will rectify themselves."²⁴²

Historians often frame the Chinese monarchy during the Han and T'ang dynasties as a struggle between an "inner court" (*nei-ch'ao* – imperial kin, eunuchs, and informal advisers) and an "outer court" (*wai-ch'ao* – the graded bureaucracy). In this dichotomy, the triumph of the inner over the outer court led to dynastic collapse. The Sung emperors imposed controls on the major elements that would have comprised a menacing "inner court," and so avoided this fate. They spent lavishly on subsidies for the imperial clan, and awarded its leaders high-sounding titles and salaries, but kept them far away from real power.²⁴³ They redefined the role of the empress and the female palace bureaucracy, but, at least for two hundred years, kept their affinal relatives largely at bay.²⁴⁴ In the ultimate choice between inner and outer, a continuation of their founders' policies and the increasing vibrancy of literati culture pulled the Sung monarchs toward the outer court. And the relationship between the sovereign and his chief councilors became the axis of Sung political life. If this choice bought the Sung monarchs a measure of domestic tranquility, the price they paid was a slow devolution of their authority into the hands of the chief councilors.

The chief councilor

In 1071, the court was discussing the merits of Wang An-shih's New Policies. The following exchange occurred between Emperor Shen-tsung and Commissioner of Military Affairs Wen Yen-po (1006–97):

WEN: The policies of the ancestors are fine just as they are. There is no need to change them and so lose the hearts of the people.

EMPEROR: If we change the policies, that would certainly displease many of you officials (*shih ta-fu*); but would it not inconvenience the people?

WEN: You rule together with us who are the officials, not with the people.²⁴⁵

In terms of modern corporate organization, if the emperor was the chairman of the board, the chief councilor was his chief executive officer. The analogy is hardly exact, since chief councilors, in theory and often in practice, exercised

²⁴² Yao-lu (1988) 142, pp. 2286–7. For the *Lao-tzu* quotation and this interpretation, see Ssu-ma, *Shih-chi* 63, p. 2143; and D. C. Lau (Lau Dim Cheuk), trans., *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching* (Harmondsworth, 1967), pp. 9–10, 106. For additional evidence of Kao-tsung's commitment to being "limpid and still," see *SS* (1977) 462, p. 13530.

²⁴³ Chaffee, *Branches of heaven*, pp. 10–11, and *passim*.

²⁴⁴ On this point, see *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 10, p. 204; also Liu Kuang-tsu (1142–1222) in Huang Huai et al., eds., *Li-tai ming-ch'en tsou-i* (1416; Taipei, 1964) 70, p. 16a.

²⁴⁵ *HCP* (1979) 221, p. 5370.

authority as members of a group, the State Council. But the office of chief councilor was the pinnacle of the Sung bureaucracy, the chief officer charged with formulating and executing policy. As symbol of his status as leader of "we who are the officials," the chief councilors "led the formation" (*ya-pan*) of court officials at formal morning audience with the emperor. The emperor personally chose his chief councilors and determined their seniority vis-à-vis each other. Although he was theoretically free to choose whomever he wished, in practice he chose from a small group of elite officials whose career paths had groomed them for the top post and with whom he had direct experience. That path usually included a previous position as Finance Commissioner (*san-ssu shih*), Han-lin academician, prefect of K'ai-feng (*chih K'ai-feng fu*), or head of the Censorate (*yü-shih chung-ch'eng*).²⁴⁶

The State Council comprised the leadership of the "two headquarters" (*erb-fu*). These were the Military Affairs Commission and the Secretariat–Chancellery. After 1082, the Secretariat–Chancellery was divided and reorganized into the Three Departments, these being the Department of the Secretariat (*Chung-shu sheng*), the Department of the Chancellery (*Men-hsia sheng*) and the Department of State Affairs. Taken together the two headquarters made up the court or central administration of Sung government. The English term "chief councilor" translates the Chinese *tsai-hsiang*, an archaic term used in the Sung in a general and quasi-official way to refer to a chief executive. The actual titles of a Sung chief councilor reflected his position as a supervisory official in the Secretariat–Chancellery or, after 1082, in the Three Departments. These titles changed five times over the course of the dynasty and mirrored changes in the structure of these central organizations and in their relationship with the Military Affairs Commission. The details of these changes are highly technical and beyond the scope of this chapter. However, the chief councilors' office is fundamental to Sung political history, and the following three paragraphs attempt to summarize these developments.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ Hung, *Jung-chai hsiü-pi* 3, p. 251; *Jung-chai san-pi* 4, p. 464; *Jung-chai wu-pi* 10, pp. 929–30. For the "fast-track" career path, see Umehara, "Civil and military officials in the Sung," pp. 17–19.

²⁴⁷ For primary sources, see SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 1, pp. 16a–77a; 2, pp. 1a–6a; 3, pp. 1a–12b; 4, pp. 1a–18a; Anonymous, *Sung ta chao-ling chi* 51–70, pp. 259–342; SS (1977) 161, pp. 3767–96; *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 10, pp. 196–7, 200–2. The tables of membership on the State Council in the *Sung history* (SS (1977) 210–14, pp. 5415–660) provide the foundation for Liang T'ien-hsi, *Sung tsai-hsiang piao hsin-pien* (Taipei, 1996), an indispensable work for research on Sung institutional history. For a comprehensive study, see Chu-ko I-ping, *Sung-tai tsai-fu chib-tu yen-chiu* (Peking, 2000). For a clear and detailed exposition of changes in the chief councilorship, see Chin Chung-shu, "Sung-tai san-sheng chang-kuan fei-chih ti yen-chiu," *Hsin-ya hsiieh-pao* 11 No. 1 (1974), pp. 89–147, reprinted in *Sung-shih yen-chiu chi: Ti shih-ch'ü chi*, ed. Sung-shih tso-t'an-hui (Taipei, 1986), pp. 39–92. See also the entries in Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chib tz'u-tien*, pp. 76–88, 156–84.

The early Sung inherited the political structures of the militarized states of the Five Dynasties. Real power was concentrated in the Military Affairs Commission. The combined Secretariat–Chancellery of the T'ang survived as a document-processing center. The traditional T'ang Six Ministries within the Department of State Affairs were defunct. Initially, the Sung chief councilors were secondary in importance to the Military Affairs Commissioner. But, as soon as literati culture began to emerge in the early eleventh century, the first of the great chief councilors also emerged in the person of Lü I-chien. Sung chief councilors through 1082 were appointed Joint Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat–Chancellery (*T'ung chung-shu men-bsia p'ing-ch'ang shih*), a T'ang title that originally conferred authority to participate in deliberations in the Hall of Administration (*Cheng-shih t'ang*) or State Council. The number of chief councilors in this period was not fixed, but there were usually three at any one time. The Secretariat–Chancellery was subdivided into the Five Offices (*Wu fang*), one each for general administration, personnel, revenue, justice, and rites. These offices were staffed by clerks, and were known collectively as the Bureau of Edicts (*Chih-ch'ih yüan*), a designation that emphasized their secretarial and clerical rather than policy function. In 972, T'ai-tsu revived the old title, Participant in Determining Governmental Affairs (*Ts'an-chih cheng-shih*), often translated as assistant chief councilor. This title was conferred as a supplementary title on selected high-level officials and qualified them to participate in meetings of the State Council. There were usually two or three assistant chief councilors, and the position was often given to officials whom the emperor considered possible chief councilor material. Lastly, the State Council also included the supervisory officials of the Military Affairs Commission (*shu-mi shih* and *shu-mi fu-shih*), of whom there were two or three at any one time. Membership on the State Council thus fluctuated in the Northern Sung, but averaged about seven to eight members.

The Yüan-feng reform of 1082 attempted to restore the theoretical model of T'ang government outlined in the 738 *Sixfold statutes of T'ang*. This text described a central government with three more or less equal “departments,” each with a separate governmental function: the Secretariat would initiate policy, the Chancellery would review policy, and State Affairs would effect policy. To achieve this end, the reform divided the former Secretariat–Chancellery into two units, re-created the traditional Six Ministries under the Department of State Affairs, and transferred operations of the Five Offices into the Six Ministries. Additionally, the Six Ministries were divided into two groups. A “left” group included the Ministries of Personnel, Revenue, and Rites; a “right” group included the Ministries of War (*Ping-pu*), Justice, and Works (*Kung-pu*). There were two chief councilors. The Left Chief Councilor was Left Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs and concurrent Vice

Director of the Chancellery (*Shang-shu tso p'u-yeh chien men-hsia shih-lang*). The Right Chief Councilor held a similar title but was concurrently Vice Director of the Secretariat (there were no directors). The position of Assistant Chief Councilor was abolished, replaced by Left and Right Assistant Directors of the Department of State Affairs (*Shang-shu tso yu-ch'eng*). This massive reorganization of government into left and right found concrete manifestation in a new administration building that housed the Department of State Affairs and the offices of the two chief councilors.²⁴⁸

For reasons to be described below, this system never worked and was revised a number of times in the late Northern Sung. In 1129, the new administration of Emperor Kao-tsung combined elements of the pre-1082 and post-1082 organizations. The rigid distinctions between the three departments were abandoned, and they became essentially one. "Left" and "right" chief councilors were retained, mainly to designate seniority (left over right); both were, however, again subtitled Joint Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat–Chancellery. The designation of assistant chief councilor was revived. Finally, in 1172, Emperor Hsiao-tsung changed the formal titles of chief councilors to simply Left, or Right, Councilor-in-Chief (*Tso yu ch'eng-hsiang*) and made them concurrent Military Affairs Commissioner. The early Sung emperors had insisted upon a strict separation of civil and military authority, and in the Northern Sung concurrent appointments – making the same man chief councilor and Military Affairs Commissioner – occurred only during wartime. In the Southern Sung, however, this strict separation began to erode. The reforms of 1172 marked the end of the independent Military Affairs Commissioner, although appointees to subordinate Commission positions continued to serve as members of the State Council.

The chief councilors' working day was occupied – remarkably like a modern executive – with meetings and paperwork. We will discuss the paperwork below. Before 1082, the offices of the chief councilors were in the Hall of Administration, and afterward in the newly constructed building for the Six Ministries. Both buildings were located within the Great Inner, in other words within the imperial palace compound. In the mid-eleventh century, the support staff at the Secretariat–Chancellery numbered at least two to three hundred clerks, although this number ballooned after the Yüan-feng reforms. The councilorship came with an additional allotment of seventy personal attendants. Clerks, dressed in red robes, escorted the councilor on horseback from

²⁴⁸ For a description of the building, including the dimensions of each subdivision, see P'ang, *Wen-ch'ang tsa-lu* 3, pp. 29–30. The building was divided on a north–south axis, with the "left" on the east and the "right" on the west. The offices of the chief councilors were in the front, toward the south; subsidiary offices were behind them to the north and culminated in the individual left and right ministries.

his residence outside the palace into the Great Inner. At the conclusion of the working day, often in the Northern Sung after a noon meal that was served to senior officials in the Hall, clerks escorted the councilor back to his residence.²⁴⁹ This custom is perhaps reflected in a number of Sung and Yüan paintings that depict red-robed grooms and horses.

That day began with the morning audience and the presentation of memorials. It continued at the Hall of Administration where the chief councilors met on a regular basis with subordinate staff. The councilors sat at desks facing south. Administrative-class officials were permitted to sit, facing north; executory-class officials stood to make their reports. To make such a visit to the office of the chief councilor was called "to pass the hall" (*kuo-t'ang*).²⁵⁰ The purpose of the meetings was to keep the chief councilors informed of issues and developments within the jurisdictions of the subordinate officers. Officially, the Sung state discouraged informal contacts between the chief councilors and other officials. Councilors were initially forbidden to receive guests in their own residences, so all contacts took place in their offices. Li T'ao writes that over a hundred people per day pressed to see the councilor, but that 80 to 90 percent involved "private" matters. Restrictions on non-office contacts were relaxed, but sanctions were imposed on officials who brought up private business as they "passed the hall." In 1042, the emperor reinforced an old statute that fined officials who visited the Secretariat on nonofficial business one month's salary.²⁵¹

The back offices of the chief councilor, as stated above, were not involved in policy but were simply centers for processing documents. They were staffed by professional clerks, who had their own hierarchy, but were not graded officials (*shih ta-fu*). After 1082, two or three graded officials in each of the Six Ministries and their twenty-four subunits (*ssu*) supervised a much larger number of clerks. Statistics on clerical staffing levels across the Six Ministries reveal a vast disparity in workload across these various units and hint at what the Sung central government actually did on a day-to-day basis. Li Hsin-ch'uan gives early Southern Sung clerical quotas for the Six Ministries as follows: Personnel 359, Revenue 288, Rites 56, War 135, Justice 63, and Works 19.²⁵² Clearly the

²⁴⁹ SHY (1966) *I-chih* 4, pp. 10a-11b.

²⁵⁰ P'ang, *Wen-ch'ang tsa-lu* 3, p. 27; Chu Yü, *P'ing-chou k'o-t'an* (1119; TSCC ed.) 1, p. 2; Chao, *Ch'ao-yeh lei-yao* 4, p. 90.

²⁵¹ HCP (1979) 32, pp. 715-16; SHY (1966) *i-chih* 8, p. 29a.

²⁵² *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 12, p. 250; Yao-lu (1988) 22, pp. 475. Umehara Kaoru has reconstructed the clerical quotas for each subunit of the Six Ministries from data in the *Compendium of Sung documents*. His figures are: Personnel 329; Revenue 291; Rites 59; War 43; Justice 30; there are no statistics for Works; see *Sōdai kanryō seido kenkyū*, pp. 533-5. Both sets of numbers represent statutory quotas, or the number of official clerks billeted to a specific office, not the actual numbers of clerks who worked there. There were often large numbers of "above-quota" clerks. For example, James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien)

Ministries of Personnel and Revenue were the main centers of action. Warfare and defense were also, of course, vital, and the Military Affairs Commission had its own quota of 327 clerks. But within the Six Ministries, the major concerns of the Sung central government were, first and foremost, itself, the processing of personnel actions; second, the raising and tracking of revenue. The actual number of surviving documents, as preserved in the *Compendium of Sung documents*, also supports this image. By far the largest section, at 1,900 pages, concerns government officials (*chih-kuan*); followed by trade and finance (*shih-buo*) at 1,659 pages; and rites (*li*) a close third at 1,461 pages.

Two patches of poetic doggerel from the mid-twelfth century confirm this statistical portrait of the workload in the Six Ministries. A popular ditty ranked each of the Six Ministries in terms of how hard its officials had to work:

In Personnel
 with Merits, Accolades, and Test
 the tips of brushes never rest
 In Revenue
 with Taxes, Treasury, and Grain
 its day and night in constant pain . . .
 But
 In Works
 with Forests, Waterways, and Posts
 in broad daylight one sees the ghosts.

But the clerks reworked the ditty to describe how much bribery they could extract and the lifestyle that an assignment in each ministry would support:

In Personnel
 with Honors, Accolades, and Test
 three wives plus concubines with zest
 In Revenue
 with Taxes, Treasury, and Grain
 the fattest lambs, the best champagne . . .
 But
 In Works
 with Forests, Waterways, and Posts
 we struggle by like hungry ghosts.²⁵³

puts the number of Southern Sung Personnel Ministry clerks at 900; see "The Sung views on the control of government clerks," pp. 318. Both sets of statistics, however, reflect similar proportions in staffing across the Six Ministries.

²⁵³ Lu Yu, *Lao-hsiieh an pi-chi*, ed. Li Chien-hsiung and Liu Te-chüan (c.1200; Peking, 1979) 6, pp. 82-3. I have taken certain minor liberties with the translation to reproduce the flavor of the original. In the second line of each stanza, the three capitalized words ("Honors, Grades, and Test," etc.) are subunits within the respective ministries.

The remonstrance organs

The Yüan historians who compiled the *Sung history* (*Sung-shih*) wrote, "If we examine the foundations of the Sung state, then its heart and soul were the Censorate and Bureau of Policy Criticism."²⁵⁴ The English word "Censorate" has unfortunately become the standard translation for the Chinese *Yü-shih t'ai*, literally, Terrace of Imperial Scribes. A basic unit of Chinese government since Han times, the "Censorate" seldom censored documents. Its closest modern parallel would be the internal-affairs division of a large urban police department. Its purpose was twofold. First, independently of other agencies, it gathered information and kept the emperor informed on conditions in the state. Second, it kept watch over the bureaucracy and enforced rules and standards for official conduct. In the metaphor of the state as a body, the censors were the "eyes and ears" of the sovereign. The Bureau of Policy Criticism was a unique eleventh-century institution. Its advocates pushed to turn the bureau into a formal agency that would critique the chief councilors and even the emperor himself. In the minds of these advocates, the bureau would watch the policy makers just as the Censorate watched the bureaucracy. Their failure to turn these aspirations into lasting political structures is among the most profound stories in Chinese politics and accounts for the intense interest in the Sung remonstrance organs among modern Chinese scholars, who often see the Sung experience as relevant to their own times.²⁵⁵

Like other units of central government, the Censorate had atrophied during the tenth century, and the early Sung emperors appointed censors only sporadically. The origins of the Sung Censorate as a freestanding agency are murky, but Li T'ao traced the beginnings to 1004.²⁵⁶ The origins of the Bureau of Policy Criticism, as well as an expanded Censorate, date from 1017, when Emperor Chen-tsung ordered that six billets be dedicated to censors and an additional six to policy critics. Before taking this action, he made two points in conversation with his advisers. He told them he had heard rumors that he was averse to remonstrance, and he intended to fill these positions with the best literary talents available.²⁵⁷ These conversations suggest that, at least in

²⁵⁴ SS (1977) 390, p. 11963. "Heart and soul" attempts to translate the Chinese term *yüan-ch'i*, primal or original essence.

²⁵⁵ For primary sources, see SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 1, pp. 78a-83b; 3, pp. 50a-61b; 17, pp. 1a-40a; and SS (1977) 164, pp. 3869-73. There is a large secondary scholarship in Chinese. Particularly detailed, with a good bibliography, is Chia Yü-ying, *Sung-tai chien-ch'ia chih-tu* (K'ai-feng, 1996). More concise but particularly insightful is Yü Yün-kuo, *Sung-tai t'ai-chien chih-tu yen-chiu* (Shanghai, 2001). See also Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien*, pp. 377-87.

²⁵⁶ HCP (1979) 48, p. 1053; also Yü-hai (1988) 121, pp. 43a-45a.

²⁵⁷ HCP (1979) 89, pp. 2040-1; see the full edict in SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 3, p. 51a-b; and the much better text in Chao, *Sung-ch'ao chu-ch'ien tsou-i* 51, p. 556.

Chen-tsung's mind, his 1017 action was largely public relations. He intended not to widen the channel of advice that flowed to him but to expand "public" awareness about how much advice he already accepted. In this vein, only two officials were actually appointed to the twelve new vacancies he created, and these appointments soon lapsed. It was not until 1023 under the Regent Liu (Dowager Empress Liu) that such appointments were again mentioned as a possible way to check the growing power of the chief councilors, and not until 1032 that a freestanding bureau was actually created.²⁵⁸ But Chen-tsung's initial statements link the rise of the remonstrance function in Sung government directly to the rise of literati officials. Whether the literati pushed the emperor or the emperor used the literati, the greatest policy critics of the eleventh century were also the greatest literati, men such as Ou-yang Hsiu and Ssu-ma Kuang.

In terms of personnel and organization, after 1082, the Censorate had three divisions. The Headquarters Bureau (*T'ai-yüan*) contained only two billets, the Vice Censor-in-Chief (*Yü-shih chung-ch'eng*), who was the chief supervisory official (there was no Censor-in-Chief; the post was always vacant), and his second-in-command, the Attendant Censor (*Shih yü-shih*). The Palace Bureau (*T'ien-yüan*) had two billets for Palace Censors (*T'ien-chung shih yü-shih*) responsible for the conduct of officials and palace ceremonies. The Investigation Bureau (*Ch'a-yüan*) had six billets for investigating censors (*chien-ch'a yü-shih*), one to oversee each of the Six Ministries. Within these three divisions there were eleven subdivisions with a total quota of forty-four clerks.²⁵⁹

The Bureau of Policy Criticism existed as a separate agency from 1032 through its dissolution in the Yüan-feng reform of 1082. During the 1020s and 1030s, nonfunctional Secretariat and Chancellery positions from the T'ang era, known collectively as "speaking officials" (*yen-kuan*), were rejuvenated and combined to make the new Bureau. Given its passion for T'ang organization charts, the 1082 reform, therefore, returned these officials to their original T'ang positions in the newly divided Secretariat and Chancellery. A "speaker" was a court official whose position duly authorized him to speak out and criticize policy either at audience or through the memorial process. All appointees to the Bureau were "speakers." Other officials, often censors, could also be invested with temporary authority to function as "speakers." Between 1032 and 1082, the Bureau had six billets: a "Left" (originally from the Chancellery) and a "Right" (originally from the Secretariat) Remonstrator (*Ssu-chien*), a Left and Right Exhorter (*Cheng-yen*), and two additional officials with other titles that could be appointed "acting policy critics" (*chih chien-yüan*). After 1082, these positions were among those gathered into the newly

²⁵⁸ HCP (1979) 100, pp. 2321-2; 111, p. 2585.

²⁵⁹ SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 17, p. 3a-b.

created Secretariat Rear Section (*Chung-shu hou-sheng*) and Chancellery Rear Section (*Men-hsia hou-sheng*), where the Yüan-feng reform concentrated officials with oversight functions of various types. This move diluted the independence of the "speakers" and marked an end to the Bureau's existence as a freestanding agency. Shortly after restoration, in 1129, there was a brief attempt to restore the Bureau's independent status. But the Bureau again fell victim to factional politics. By 1134, its billets were unoccupied, and its seal and records, then in the hands of the office clerks, were transferred back under Secretariat-Chancellery control.²⁶⁰

As the 1034 letter from Ou-yang Hsiu to Fan Chung-yen, cited above, points out, speakers could address the monarch on any policy issue. This was a remarkable power in a system that strictly forbade civil servants to write or speak on official matters outside the jurisdictions of their current positions. In the Northern Sung, censors and speakers enjoyed considerable autonomy to work free of pressure from the chief councilors, from other officials, and even from the emperor himself. Neither were individual censors required to inform their superiors or their colleagues about the nature of their investigations, and individual censors often weighed in on different sides of the same issue. To isolate them further from outside influence, they were forbidden during their tenure of office from writing sponsorship recommendations for other officials.²⁶¹ According to one source, Censorate or Bureau indictments forced twenty-three chief councilors from office during the Northern Sung.²⁶² However, by the late eleventh century, political factionalism and the growing power of the chief councilors had already eroded this autonomy, as Su Shih's lament about the waning power of the policy critics reveals.²⁶³ Southern Sung literati sources, especially *Tao-hsiieh* works, are filled with purported Northern Sung anecdotes that stress the independence of censors and policy critics. But these anecdotes are often inventions to bolster the demand for greater literati autonomy within the contemporary Southern Sung political structure. They testify to what was absent rather than to what had actually existed.²⁶⁴

²⁶⁰ SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 3, pp. 56a-b.

²⁶¹ HCP (1979) 44, p. 940; 52, p. 1139; 471, pp. 11242-3; SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 65, p. 29b.

²⁶² Huang Kuan-chung, *Wan-Sung ch'ao-ch'en tui kuo-shih te cheng-i: Li-tsung shih-tai te ho-chan, pien-fang bo liu-min* (Taipei, 1978), p. 2.

²⁶³ See note 53 above.

²⁶⁴ Two examples: First, Chang Chiu-ch'eng (1092-1159), then a Classics Mat instructor, urges Emperor Kao-tsung to permit censors to review all imperial appointments; see Hsieh Ts'ai-po, *Mi-chai pi-chi* (1241; SKCS ed.) 1, p. 11b. Second, Remonstrator Fu Yao-yü (1024-91) resists Emperor Ying-tsung's suggestion that Fu should investigate Ts'ai Hsiang (1012-67) with the reply "I am a remonstrating official; even if you order me to investigate, I dare not comply!" See Chang Tzu, *Shih-hsiieh kwei-fan* (SKCS ed.) 25, p. 5a-b; and SS (1977) 341, p. 10883. Neither of these anecdotes, both probably twelfth-century inventions, is present in the *Chronological record* or the *Long draft*.

Key to understanding the failure of the Censorate and the Bureau to endure as lasting components of the Sung political power structure is to appreciate that no Sung official – not even councilors, censors, or policy critics – enjoyed any measure of statutory protection for what they wrote or said. The emperor had absolute and ultimate authority over all appointments. As we shall see below, the emperor had several options for how he could handle a censorial report. Tradition, however, maintained that if his report was not accepted, the censor had failed in his duty. He then submitted his resignation and remained at home “awaiting punishment” (*tai-tsui*). The emperor was then required, in writing, to accept or reject his resignation. If he rejected the resignation, the censor could resign once again, in writing, restating the findings of his original report. These protocols could lead to protracted standoffs. In an epic battle of wills in 1051, Jen-tsung refused to accept a policy report from Fan Chen (1008–89) concerning the designation of an heir apparent. Jen-tsung refused Fan’s resignation seven times; Fan wrote nineteen reports on the matter and grew gray “awaiting punishment” for almost a year. Jen-tsung acknowledged his loyalty, but refused to budge on the issue.²⁶⁵

Writing in 1061, almost thirty years after his letter to Fan Chung-yen, Ou-yang Hsiu was more sanguine about the role of the policy critic in the ever-shifting relationship among monarch, councilor, and critic. Much depended on the personality of the sovereign, Ou-yang observed. On the one hand, if he was hard-hearted and suspicious, he would welcome criticism of his councilors; and under such a sovereign, “criticizing the ruler is hard, but criticizing the councilor is easy.” On the other hand, if the sovereign, like Jen-tsung, is lenient and himself receptive to criticism, then more criticism is forthcoming and his councilors become more sensitive to that criticism. Under such rulers, “criticizing the ruler is easy, but criticizing the councilor is hard.” This latter formulation became a standard quotation in Southern Sung compendia and reflects the waning authority of the remonstrance function in the face of the growing power of the Southern Sung chief councilors.²⁶⁶

Although the Censorate and Bureau had extraordinary authority to investigate and gather information, they had no actual authority to punish. Their function was simply to present information before the emperor. If he wished to proceed with an indictment, the emperor referred the matter to the proper executive and judicial authorities for prosecution. For example, in Su Shih’s 1079 trial, which was conducted at the highest levels of Sung government, the emperor himself functioned as magistrate, the Censorate functioned as the

²⁶⁵ HCP (1979) 184, p. 4454.

²⁶⁶ HCP (1979) 193, pp. 4680–3; Ou-yang Hsiu’s phrase, for example, is cited in Hsieh Wei-hsin, ed., *Ku-chin ho-pi shih-lei pei-yao, bou-chi* (SKCS ed.) 7, p. 18b.

“fact-finding” (*t’ui-k’an*) agency, but the Court of Judicial Review (*Ta-li ssu*) functioned as the “law-finding” (*chien-fa*) agency.²⁶⁷ Sung censors and policy critics relied upon generally applicable laws and regulations that were promulgated by authorized agencies of government. The Censorate also seems to have functioned as a collection point for the tens of thousands of regulations these agencies promulgated. In order to restore these collections after the loss of K’ai-feng, an order of 1133 required all agencies to forward copies of their regulations to the Censorate.²⁶⁸ The Censorate and Policy Bureau (Bureau of Policy Criticism) also had their own internal regulations and ordinances. These do not survive, but quotations suggest that they provided extensive and detailed guidelines for the conduct of investigations.²⁶⁹

These investigations relied upon three basic sources of information: rumor; copies of memorials routinely supplied to the Censorate; and, during certain periods, impounded documents. “Rumor” is an unhappy translation for the Chinese term *feng-wen*, literally “heard on the wind,” but conforms to the English notion of “unconfirmed information.” The authority to present an indictment based on unconfirmed evidence was among the most controversial aspects of the Sung Censorate. The conflict arose from the dual function of the Censorate as both an information-gathering agency and an agency that presented this information in the form of judicial indictments. As early as 1049 Jen-tsung, noting the increasingly litigious nature of his officials, forbade the Censorate to bring indictments based on rumor: there must be a signed, written accusation – with exceptions for cases involving “criticism of the court or the popular welfare.” But six months later, a remonstrator insisted that to fulfill Chen-tsung’s 1017 mandate establishing the Censorate and Bureau, these agencies needed the flexibility to indict on rumor. Since the 1049 edict, he maintained, few people had dared to offend the powerful by affixing their name to a public accusation, and submissions to the Censorate had declined in number. “Rumor” protected the source of information and so kept information flowing.²⁷⁰ However, this edict had broad exemptions and seems to have had little effect. The issue arose again in 1061, when Wang Ch’ou (d. 1065), then head of the Censorate, warned that unscrupulous officials were using the system to stir up trouble for their bureaucratic adversaries

²⁶⁷ Hartman, “The inquisition against Su Shih,” p. 229. The strict separation of “fact finding” (the discovery and presentation of evidence) and “law finding” (the determination of criminality and the fixing of sentence) was basic to Sung law.

²⁶⁸ SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 17, pp. 19b–20a. ²⁶⁹ See, for example, Yao-lu (1988) 70, p. 1181.

²⁷⁰ Chao, *Sung-ch’ao chu-ch’ien tsou-i* 51, pp. 562–3. The full text of the 1049 edict is printed as a headnote to this text. All other texts of the edict, including CSW (2006), Volume 45, p. 207, are abridged. Hung Mai traced the beginnings of rumor-based indictments to the Six Dynasties; see Hung, *Jung-chai ssu-pi* 11, pp. 747–8.

and to settle private scores. He defended the use of information "heard on the wind," but maintained that the Censorate did not have the manpower to investigate every unsubstantiated accusation. He urged an edict imposing sanctions on officials who knowingly brought false charges before the Censorate, and the edict was produced.²⁷¹

In the Southern Sung, misuse of the Censorate for personal gain reached epidemic proportions and contributed to the institution's decline. Regulations required that officials submit to the Censorate copies of some categories of official correspondence with other agencies (*kuan-pao*, literally "linked notification"; in modern terms, "carbon copies").²⁷² When bureaucratic disputes arose, many took advantage of this provision to send "short scrolls" (*tuan-chuan*) to the Censorate. These were truncated versions of official documents, doctored to slant an issue in favor of the presenter and against his opponent. Some officials also submitted "short scrolls" anonymously in an effort to slander adversaries, and so the practice fell under the general category of information "heard on the wind." Emperor Hsiao-tsung prohibited censors from accepting "short scrolls," but the practice continued under a variety of guises until the end of the dynasty.²⁷³

The Censorate also routinely received copies of important memorials that arrived in the capital from the provinces. In 1043, Ou-yang Hsiu, then in the Bureau of Policy Criticism, requested that his agency also receive such copies. He objected to an executive order that had confined to the Military Affairs Commission circulation of a provincial report that described the rebellion of Wang Lun (1043). If their opinions were to be incorporated into decisions before they were promulgated as edicts, he argued, censors and policy critics must be informed of developments in a timely way.²⁷⁴ On the one hand, the 1082 reform removed the authority of the Censorate and Bureau to receive "copies," and this was restored only to the Censorate in 1098.²⁷⁵ This provision accounts partially for the demise of the Bureau in relation to the Censorate after 1082. On the other hand, the reform granted authority to both bodies to impound documents from other court agencies, essentially the right to demand "copies" of specific documents.²⁷⁶

²⁷¹ HCP (1979) 194, pp. 4687-92; for the complete edict, see Anonymous, *Sung ta chao-ling chi* 194, p. 712. Certain texts suggest that the authority to indict based on rumor was a power that emperors by turns both granted and denied to the Censorate; see Wu Tseng, *Neng-kai ch'ai man-lu* (1157; TSCC ed.) 12, p. 326.

²⁷² SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 55, pp. 27a-28a.

²⁷³ See the memorial of Li Ch'un (1111-83) in Huang et al., eds., *Li-tai ming-ch'en tsou-i* 52, pp. 9b-11a.

²⁷⁴ Ou-yang, *Ou-yang wen-chung kung wen-chi* 98, pp. 9a-10a.

²⁷⁵ HCP (1979) 501, p. 11931. ²⁷⁶ SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 3, p. 55a-b.

Officers of the Censorate and the Bureau presented their findings in two ways: at audience or through memorials. Both censors and policy critics each had one slot per month in the regular rotation for audience with the emperor. If the matter was urgent, they were required to request an audience through application to the Secretariat. This requirement caused delays, and opened the door for chief councilors to influence the process. In 1045, however, policy critics were allowed to take the next available audience slot upon simple notification at the Postern Office (*ko-men ssu*). In 1068, this provision was extended to censors.²⁷⁷ The normal time limits for audience presentation were waived for censors and critics, and other officials were required to cede time to them if the audience session was drawing to an end. They also enjoyed a certain measure of privacy during their audience with the emperor. Normally, officials were received at audience as part of a "group" (*pan*) that usually included other members of their agency. Censors and critics, however, for most of the Northern Sung, were received individually. Furthermore, at least after 1064, the emperor's personal retainers (eunuchs and guards) were required to withdraw from earshot when a "speaker" had audience.²⁷⁸

A censorial report could also be submitted, without audience, as a memorial. In the early Sung, these were routed through the chief councilors' office; but after 1017, they went directly to the emperor. Upon receipt, he had several options. He could "hold the report within" (*liu-chung*); that is, not refer the matter to the outside court. If the matter was held within, he could either do nothing, or take private action himself (if the matter concerned a chief councilor). If he chose to act publicly, he could annotate the report with his instructions for disposition and refer it to the Secretariat for implementation. Or he could refer the matter to the Secretariat to solicit consideration and advice. The State Council would then consider the matter, and the Secretariat would memorialize the emperor, suggesting a course of action and requesting permission to implement it. In any case, the censor who had submitted the report was informed of the outcome of his efforts.²⁷⁹

Censors and critics could also exercise their authority in less direct ways. A censor could route his report to the Secretariat, with or without a copy to the emperor. Although the Secretariat could not take action without memorializing the emperor, the goal of this tactic was to enlist support for the measure before it reached the emperor, and thus pressure him not to "hold it within."

²⁷⁷ Yeh, *Shih-lin yen-yü* 9, p. 138; also SHY (1966) *i-chih* 6, pp. 15a-16a.

²⁷⁸ HCP (1979) 200, p. 4846.

²⁷⁹ Yao-lu (1988) 35, p. 679. The collected works of Sung officials contain sporadic traces of these notifications. See Ssu-ma Kuang, *Ch'uan-chia chi* (SKCS ed.) 19, p. 1a; Fan, *Fan T'ai-shih chi* (SKCS ed.) 26, p. 1a; Ch'en Fu-liang, *Chih-chai chi* (SKCS ed.) 21, p. 10b; 22, p. 12b; 23, p. 6a.

Another technique that arose in the late eleventh century was to “copy” (*fu-pen*) the target of the indictment, as well as the Secretariat. The goal was to increase the indictment’s publicity and leverage its political effect in an effort either to pressure the emperor into accepting the report or to force the target to resign. A related technique that gained popularity in the Southern Sung was the practice of “open drafts” (*lu-chang*), whereby the target himself was sent a preliminary draft of the censor’s forthcoming indictment. In periods where the Censorate was under the control of strong chief councilors, receipt of an “open draft” was usually sufficient pressure to force the target to resign from office.²⁸⁰

The intense factionalism that arose in the latter half of the Northern Sung put severe pressures on the Censorate and the Bureau of Policy Criticism. Those who would control the court soon learned that they had first to control these sources of potential criticism. Between 1068 and 1071, Wang An-shih engineered the dismissal of nineteen censors and critics.²⁸¹ In 1086, Censor Sun Sheng (1038–99) warned that censors during Wang’s administration “were not the eyes and hears of Your Majesty but became rather the hawks and hounds of the chief councilor.”²⁸² The Bureau did not survive as a freestanding agency into the Southern Sung. The Censorate was so compromised that, by the mid-twelfth century, it had become, as Sun Sheng had warned, little more than an extension of the chief councilor’s office.²⁸³ The emperors themselves contributed to this decline. From the beginning, they were willing to use criticism when it suited their own ends. But the system allowed censors to comment on what the monarchs often considered internal matters, areas where criticism was less appreciated. In retaliation, an emperor sometimes reacted in ways that eroded the Censorate’s ability to function on any issue. For example, in 1051 censors railed against the cost of perquisites that Jen-tsung lavished on the family of his favorite consort. Jen-tsung responded by requiring them to petition the Secretariat for audience slots, thus effectively banning them, at least temporarily, from speaking at audience on any issue.²⁸⁴

²⁸⁰ *Yao-lu* (1988) 151, p. 2436.

²⁸¹ *SS* (1977) 327, p. 10546; Paul Jakov Smith, “Shen-tsung’s reign and the new policies of Wang An-shih, 1067–1085,” in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 5, Part 1: *The Sung dynasty and its precursors, 907–1279*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge and New York, 2009), here pp. 373–8.

²⁸² *HCP* (1979) 376, p. 9126.

²⁸³ See Gong Wei Ai (Chiang Wei-ai), “The usurpation of power by Ch’in Kuei through the Censorial organ (1138–1155 A.D.),” *Chinese Culture* 15 (1974), pp. 25–42.

²⁸⁴ *HCP* (1979) 169, p. 4070; *SS* (1977) 242, pp. 8622–3. In 1033, Jen-tsung ordered the censors to submit sealed memorials rather than present their findings in open court and so “agitate all the officials.” See *HCP* (1979) 113, p. 2649.

Monarchs could also take other less direct measures. As long as he was willing and able to withstand the political pressure, the sovereign could "hold within" a report indefinitely. Empress Kao in 1088–9 held within and refused comment on twenty indictments submitted by Exhorter Liu An-shih (1048–1125) against Chief Councilor Hu Tsung-yü (1029–94).²⁸⁵ The empress was more forthcoming a year later when Exhorter Liu and Fan Tsu-yü memorialized that they had "heard on the wind" that Emperor Che-tsung, then aged twelve, was already having sex. When they urged the Empress to "protect the divine body," she assured them and the chief councilor that the rumors were false.²⁸⁶ Custom forbade the monarch from inquiring about a censor's sources, but he could return a report for further details and analysis, essentially accusing the censor of poor performance.²⁸⁷ By early Southern Sung, the system of documentary controls that insured the integrity of transmission from Censorate to monarch to Secretariat had broken down. In 1138, the head of the Censorate complained that Censorate reports were being edited and abridged beyond recognition: the text upon which the emperor took action no longer resembled the text which the censor had submitted.²⁸⁸ The thirteenth-century scholar Tu Fan (1182–1245) wrote that in his time Censorate reports that reached Emperor Li-tsung had been entirely rewritten and did not even possess the Censorate seal.²⁸⁹

Well before the end of the Northern Sung, the Censorate and the Bureau, despite a considerable body of supportive tradition and precedent, had failed to attain an institutional status that would allow them to compete at political parity with the monarch and the chief councilors. Both monarchs and councilors saw little to lose in the demise of their institutional monitors. Only the sovereign had power to preserve the strength of the remonstrance agencies, and he had his own motives for keeping them subservient. It was easier to allow the chief councilors to dominate these difficult agencies. The monarch, however, thereby lost a powerful check on the growing authority of the councilors. As early as 1055, Chao Pien (1008–84) warned Jen-tsung that the remonstrance agencies were the only effective check on the power of the chief councilors: if these agencies do not function, "you will not be informed, you will hear no sentiments from below, and ultimately your own position will be endangered."²⁹⁰

²⁸⁵ *HCP* (1979) 417, pp. 10133–5; 423, p. 10238.

²⁸⁶ Fan Tsu-yü and Liu An-shih in Chao, *Sung-ch'ao chu-ch'ien tsou-i* 29, pp. 281–6.

²⁸⁷ See P'eng Ju-li (1042–95) in Chao, *Sung-ch'ao chu-ch'ien tsou-i* 53, pp. 583–4; also *HCP* (1979) 285, pp. 6977–8.

²⁸⁸ *Yao-lu* (1988) 108, p. 1898. For Emperor Hsiao-tsung's relation to censors and critics, see Lau, "The absolutist reign of Sung Hsiao-tsung," pp. 107–57.

²⁸⁹ Tu, *Ch'ing-hsien chi* 8, pp. 2a–b.

²⁹⁰ *HCP* (1979) 180, p. 4346. For another example from 1097, see *HCP* (1979) 493, pp. 11717–18. Both expressions occurred in the context of factional struggles against specific chief councilors.

But the literati and other officials also shared responsibility for this demise. When the chief councilor misused the Censorate for his own public, political ends, his techniques were simply a larger manifestation of ways the literati misused the institution for their own private ends. At the beginning of his reign, Emperor Hsiao-tsung was asked why he had been slow to fill vacant remonstrance positions. His excuse was perhaps self-serving but also caught a major piece of the problem: "Most literati (*shih ta-fu*) sold out their integrity long ago, so it's hard to make these appointments."²⁹¹ In the end, literati misuse of the remonstrance agencies destroyed their best chance to restrain the power either of their own leader, the chief councilor, or of their ultimate master, the monarch.

GOVERNMENT DECISION MAKING

The audience

In theory, the Sung government made policy and implemented decisions in a simple way: one first "obtained the imperial will" (*ch'ü sheng-chih*) – that is, determined what the emperor wanted to do – then one issued an "edict" – that is, ordered the relevant authorities to implement these wishes. In practice, this simple process entailed a Byzantine mosaic of rituals, consultations, endless document shuffling and revising, all interlocked through ever-shifting compendia of bureaucratic precedent and regulation. The emperor could not simply tell someone what to do. To have legal force, the imperial will had to be expressed in writing and pass through proper oversight procedures. In the chaotic last days of the Northern Sung, an unruly street mob confronted Emperor Ch'in-tsung. A local tough offered to quell the mob in exchange for an appointment to office. On the spot, Ch'in-tsung took a sheet of paper and wrote, "make him Vice Minister of War (*Ping-pu shih-lang*)." Later, the chief councilor, even in the face of these extraordinary circumstances, refused to process the unorthodox appointment.²⁹² Even the emperor could not simply appoint someone to office without going through proper procedure. There were two ways that one could "obtain the imperial will" through a face-to-face encounter with the emperor at audience, or through the submission of a written "memorial" to him.

The English word "audience" translates the Chinese *ch'ao*, an old term that described the seasonal visits of feudal lords to the Chou dynasty sovereign. Both the Chinese and English terms cover a wide range of Sung pageants, ceremonies, and interviews at which a group of officials through ritual gestures

²⁹¹ *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 5, p. 125.

²⁹² *SS* (1977) 371, p. 11522.

paid obeisance to the sovereign. The time and location of the ceremony, the number and rank of the officials who participated, the length and depth of the interviews – all depended on the type of “audience” and varied continually over the course of the dynasty. At the upper end of the spectrum was the “grand audience assembly” (*ta ch'ao hui*), held three times yearly, including the first day of the year. Envoys from foreign countries, all court officials, and capital representatives of provincial governments offered simultaneous greetings and obeisance to the emperor and empress in an elaborate choreographed ceremony complete with musical accompaniment. A lavish banquet for the several thousand participants followed. At the other end of the “audience” scale, the emperor could issue an “inner invitation” (*nei-yin*) to an official for a private, open-ended discussion over tea, without guards.²⁹³

The daily audience between the emperor and his officials was the central decision-making vehicle of Sung government. However, the Sung inherited a hodgepodge of audience protocols from the T'ang and Five Dynasties and was slow to adapt these to its own needs. From a modern perspective, the basic problem was that the audience process served double duty as both a ceremonial ritual and a working session of government. These divergent demands often conflicted, and the two basic early Sung audience protocols reflect this conflict. The “regular audience” (*ch'ang-ch'ao*), or outer audience, was held each morning in the Hall of Cultured Virtue (*Wen-te tien*). The “regular obeisance” (*ch'ang ch'i-chü*), or inner audience, was held each morning in the Hall of Good Government (*Ch'ui-kung tien*). The former was descended from the T'ang period “front hall” audience (*cheng-ya*) and was revived in the early Sung. But by the middle of the eleventh century, this outer hall assembly of court officials retained only ritual significance as a manifestation of loyalty toward the emperor and as a leave-taking ceremony for officials departing to provincial assignment. Neither the emperor nor major officials with functional office, except censors, attended. Those who did attend – officials between positions or those whose positions carried no duties – assembled outside the Hall of Cultured Virtue in two groups, civil officials to the right, military officials to the left. After the two groups had bowed to each other, the censors led them into the hall, where guards and standards had already been displayed. There

²⁹³ There is an enormous primary literature on Sung audiences, but few secondary studies. The bulk of the *Compendium of Sung documents* section entitled “ceremonies and edicts” (*I-chih*) concerns audiences. See SHY (1966) *I-chih* 1, pp. 1a–9, p. 23a; *chih-kuan* 60, pp. 1a–14b; *ti-hsi* 9, pp. 1a–33b; SS (1977) 116–18, pp. 2743–93; *Yü-bai* (1988) 70, pp. 33a–44b; Sung Min-ch'iu, *Ch'un-ming t'ui-ch'ao lu*, ed. Ch'eng Kang (c.1070; Peking, 1980) 2, pp. 25–7; Chao, *Ch'ao-yeh lei-yao* 1, pp. 21–4. For secondary sources, see Chu, *Sung-tai*, pp. 99–112, 142–9; Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien*, pp. 616–18. For T'ang antecedents, see Denis C. Twitchett, *The writing of official history under the T'ang* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 35–8.

they waited until a chief councilor returned from the inner audience, at which time an usher announced that the emperor would “not sit.” The chief councilor then led the officials in a double kowtow to the vacant throne, a ritual known as “supervising the group” (*ya-pan*), and the outer audience was dismissed.²⁹⁴

There was also ritual and pageant but considerably more substance to the inner audience. At dawn, a party of imperial guards led by the Bearer of the Imperial Arms (*Tai yü ch'i-chieh*) met the emperor at the gate of the inner palace. They performed a double kowtow, and, after repeating the mantra “A myriad blessings upon the divine body,” escorted him to the Hall of Good Government. Attendance here was limited to civil officials with minister-in-attendance rank (about two dozen top officials) and a corresponding group of senior military officials. Officials attended in court regalia, which included their official robes, boots, and jade audience tablets (*yü-tai*). There were also officials from the Postern Office, who managed the audience, assorted ushers, and attendants. As the emperor ascended the dais, the guards took stations to the left and right of the throne, and the attendants repeated the mantra of greeting. At this point, officials who had received transfers and new appointments gave thanks to the emperor. After the palace guards, ushers, and eunuchs had made obeisance to the emperor, the presentation of memorials began. First came the chief councilors, followed by the supervisory officials of other major agencies. When the presentations were over, a eunuch announced, “No further public matters beyond the gate,” and the “morning audience” concluded.²⁹⁵

Depending on the period, the inner hall audience was held either every day or every other day. Afterwards, the emperor changed his robes, took breakfast, and often repaired to the Hall of Extending Harmony (*Yen-ho tien*), where he continued to hear reports from eunuchs and provincial officials, met with officials who had received an “inner invitation,” or viewed manuscripts and art objects newly acquired for the imperial collections. Such sessions were called “the second sitting in the back hall” (*hou-tien tsai-tso*). In addition to the outer, the inner, and the back hall audience, every fifth day all capital officials assembled in the inner hall to perform the “grand obeisance” (*pai-kuan ta ch'i-chü*), which consisted of a series of seven kowtows.

The Yüan-feng reform brought a measure of order to this redundant system. The fossilized outer audience was abandoned and the inner audience in

²⁹⁴ For the outer audience, see SHY (1966) *I-chih* 4, pp. 1a–8a; P'ang, *Wen-ch'ang tsa-lu* 3, pp. 33–40; SS (1977) 116, pp. 2751–3. Tai Chih, *Sbu-p'u* (c.1250; TSCC ed.), pp. 17–18, contains a useful summary of changes in the outer audience from T'ang through late Southern Sung, including the attempt to revive the ceremony in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. For the T'ang origins, see des Rotours, *Traité des fonctionnaires et Traité de l'armée*, pp. 161–2.

²⁹⁵ SHY (1966) *I-chih* 1, p. 1a–b; SS (1977) 116, pp. 2753–60.

the Hall of Good Government became the formal "front hall" ceremony. The reform established a three-tiered hierarchy of attendance requirements based on an official's rank and his importance in the decision-making process: (1) ministers-in-attendance and their military counterparts attended daily; (2) every fifth audience day, middle-ranking court officials were included, the proceedings were moved to a larger hall, and the "grand obeisance" was performed (since every fifth day amounted in theory to six times per month, such officials were called "six-attendance officials" (*liu ts'an kuan*)); (3) twice per month, on the first and the fifteenth, all capital officials joined the proceedings. Memorials were presented at all audiences.²⁹⁶ Complicated regulations governed conflicts caused by rain, official holidays (every tenth day), the suspension of audiences due to the death of prominent persons, or imperial illness.²⁹⁷

With slight modifications (six-attendance officials became "four-attendance" officials), these new audience procedures continued into Southern Sung. However, in the chaotic years immediately following 1127, the court was often on the move and seldom had access to locations that could accommodate the larger assemblies. Even after the peace of 1142 and the rebuilding of the imperial capital at Lin-an, for reasons we shall explore below, Emperor Kao-tsung and Ch'in Kuei showed little interest in reviving the larger Yüan-feng audience protocols. However, in 1162 Emperor Hsiao-tsung immediately ordered restoration of the "four-attendance" audience. By 1166 ritual guidelines were complete and officials were ordered to rehearse the new ceremony. Once the emperor had been escorted to the dais, the schedule for memorials to be presented that day was read aloud. Then various groupings of officials, beginning with the Postern Office, the imperial guards, the palace command, and the heir apparent, made a "regular obeisance" of two kowtows. There followed another group from the Military Affairs Commission that did likewise, then another group of imperial princes, army personnel, and military commissioners that did likewise. Then the palace censor entered the hall and announced the "grand obeisance" and took his station. At this point, the chief councilors and officers of the Three Departments led civil and military officials into the hall. They divided into two groups, civil and military, faced the throne and performed the "grand obeisance" of seven kowtows. The top officials of the Three Departments and the Military Affairs Commission then ascended the dais to memorialize, followed by those with new appointments, then other officials. When the

²⁹⁶ SHY (1966) *I-chih* 4, pp. 7a-8a; P'ang, *Wen-ch'ang tsa-lu* 3, pp. 36-40; Tai, *Shu-p'u*, pp. 17-18.

²⁹⁷ On these issues, see SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 60, pp. 15a-b; *li* 41, pp. 24a-60a. An ailing Emperor Chetsung, for example, at the suggestion of Tseng Pu, changed the "six-attendance" audience scheduled for August 21, 1099, to a "regular audience" so he would not have to sit so long on the dais; see Tseng Pu, *Tseng-kung i-lu* (1105; Taipei, 1981) 8, p. 6b.

presentation of memorials was finished, the emperor ended the audience and departed the hall.²⁹⁸

One should not downplay the ritual aspects of these audiences. The pageantry, military display, and ritual gesture emphasized the power of the sovereign and the loyalty of his retainers. The ceremonies also emphasized the diversity of these officers, their affiliation to the many divisions of officialdom, and their common solidarity in support of the sovereign. The audience also publicized an individual's position in the hierarchy of officials and defined his relationship with his colleagues. An official's personal-rank grade determined his exact placement within the two large audience divisions of civil and military officials. It is telling commentary that, among *Compendium of Sung documents* chapters on audience protocol, the longest subsection concerns "placement" (*wei*), where an official or group should stand in relation to others.²⁹⁹ Each attendee at audience had a precise position at which to stand, and that placement was a public manifestation of his "place" in Sung government.

Despite the pomp and ritual, the presentation of memorials remained the main order of business at audience. These presentations occurred under extremely formal conditions, in an enormous hall with hundreds of guards, soldiers, and assorted onlookers. Although most were too distant to hear anything actually said, the proceedings were nevertheless very public. Hsiao-tsung's audience protocol called for a reading of the daily schedule of memorial presentations, even before the obeisance had taken place. There were essentially four ways to get on the presentation schedule. First, in early Sung, the supervisory officials of the Secretariat–Chancellery, the Military Affairs Commission, the Finance Commission (*San-ssu*), the K'ai-feng prefectoral government (K'ai-feng fu), and the Judicial Control Office (*Shen-hsing yüan*) each led their "group" (*pan*) in the daily presentation of memorials. Later, daily presentation was limited to the Secretariat–Chancellery and the Military Affairs Commission, followed by three additional groups. Second, the emperor could directly order a specific official to come for audience (*chao-tui*), often because the official possessed information or expertise the emperor desired to access firsthand. Third, in the reverse procedure, an official could request an audience to submit his memorial to the emperor (*ch'ing-tui*). State Council members could submit with little advance notice. Other officials who ranked high enough to enjoy this privilege, however, were first

²⁹⁸ SHY (1966) *I-chih* 2, pp. 22b–23b.

²⁹⁹ SHY (1966) *I-chih* 3, pp. 1a–54a; also SS (1977) 118, pp. 2781–5. Ts'ai T'ao (b. 1097) describes how paving stones in the Hall of Good Government courtyard marked the precise location for each *pan* and how the eunuch audience supervisors made fun of returning provincial magnates who were unsure where to stand at audience; see Ts'ai T'ao, *T'ieh-wei shan ts'ung-t'an*, ed. Feng Hui-min and Shen Hsi-lin (c. 1130; Peking, 1983) 2, p. 25.

required to petition the office of the chief councilor for an audience slot. This tradition arose early in the dynasty when Chief Councilor Chao P'u (922–92) required that his office first approve the content of all audience memorials before their presentation would be scheduled.³⁰⁰ Although these restrictions eased somewhat under Emperor Chen-tsung, some form of prior restraint seems to have remained in place through 1082, when Shen-tsung ordered that chief councilors not obstruct any memorial from an official who was qualified to submit.³⁰¹ Such open access to the throne, however, was an exception. Southern Sung scholars often lamented that technical restrictions placed on qualified presenters effectively excluded them from audience presentation.

Last was the “revolving audience” (*chuan-tui*; also “rotating audience,” *lun-tui*), an institution related in spirit to the “speaking” function of the remonstrance agencies: it was meant to expose the emperor to a wider range of information and afford him the opportunity to meet every court official in a personal face-to-face encounter.³⁰² In theory, at the “grand obeisance” on every fifth day, the memorial schedule was to include one or two officials from among the general population of court officials. These rotators were to present critical memorials on nonroutine issues, such as government failings, legal injustices, or hardship conditions among the people. In time, one would proceed through all court officials, and the rotation would begin again. A practice with T'ang antecedents, the revolving audience was a sporadic event in the Sung. Biographies often mention that an official attracted the emperor's attention or presented a stunning memorial during his turn at the revolving audience. But the first attempt at serious implementation was not until the reign of Shen-tsung, and by the 1090s most upper-level officials were exempt from the rotation. Hui-tsung reduced the schedule to one rotator per month. Kao-tsung restored the plan, but Ch'in Kuei, chief councilor from 1138 through 1155, was so sensitive to criticism that most rotators, torn between their desire to impress the emperor and their fear of offending the powerful Councilor, took sick leave on the day of their rotation. By the early 1160s, the practice was nearly defunct.³⁰³ Under Hsiao-tsung, the rotation was restored, but the chief councilors, to avoid the possibility of criticism in open court, often transferred officials whom they did not trust just before their rotations were due. Many officials, therefore, never had their moment with the

³⁰⁰ Wei, *Tung-hsüan pi-lu* 14, p. 158.

³⁰¹ SHY (1966) *I-chib* 6, p. 17b; Fan Chen, *Tung-chai chi-shih* (TSCC ed.) 3, p. 18.

³⁰² On the revolving audience, see SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 60, pp. 1a–14b; HCP (1979) 32, p. 724; 47, p. 1032; SS (1977) 118, pp. 2785–8. For the Southern Sung, see the excellent note in *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 9, p. 170; and Tai, *Shu-p'u*, p. 7, for a good review of the practice from T'ang through Southern Sung.

³⁰³ *Yao-lu* (1988) 200, p. 3390.

emperor, and the revolving audience became, in the words of Li Hsin-ch'uan, "a rotation of positions, not of men."

During memorial presentations, each group mounted the dais, where the emperor was seated on a divan. Individuals read at least a portion of their memorials aloud. The emperor could stop the reading, question the official, or do nothing. The prolific records of discussions between the emperor and his senior advisers in the *Long draft* and the *Chronological record* doubtless derive from conversations that ensued following group submissions by the Secretariat–Chancellery and the Military Affairs Commission. A basic principle of Sung government was that no official (save remonstrance officials and rotators) could memorialize on matters outside the jurisdiction of the office he currently held. The Sung founders insisted upon a strict division of civilian and military responsibility between these two top agencies, and so they memorialized as two separate groups, neither knowing the other's business with the emperor. During the Tangut wars in the 1040s, however, the emperor often ordered the agencies to memorialize jointly on common issues.

In Sung practice, a joint memorial implied that the parties who submitted the document agreed upon its contents. An edict of 1082, for example, ordered mid-ranking officials of the Six Ministries to memorialize together with their supervisors and forbade them from requesting private audiences.³⁰⁴ Surviving memorials confirm this understanding. They seldom provide a range of policy options, but rather forcefully argue for one option against the foolhardiness of others. Dissent was permitted, but the dissenter then had to submit his own memorial. As the edict of 1082 implies, an official's rank sometimes precluded this option. When the Secretariat and the Commission were ordered to jointly memorialize, if they could not agree, then they submitted multiple memorials. This practice eroded the boundary between the civilian and the military authority of the two agencies, and opened the door for each to memorialize on the other's business.³⁰⁵ Hsiao-tsung's reading of the daily memorial schedule, therefore, was more than ritual pomp. The very composition of the list outlined the major political divisions of the moment. Tseng Pu's diary, for example, shows him engaging in a wide array of submission vehicles, including joint submissions, joint memorials that resulted from deliberations ordered by the emperor, and individual submissions.

³⁰⁴ HCP (1979) 327, p. 7880; SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 8, pp. 4b–5a. The joint presentation also mitigated the chances of a single official submitting a biased memorial. An edict of 1016, for example, ordered capital warehouse officials to memorialize jointly because too many single presentations from agency heads were deemed biased and nonfactual; see SHY (1979) *I-chih* 6, p. 6b; HCP (1979) 86, p. 1970.

³⁰⁵ In 1044, for example, Han Ch'i (1008–75), then assistant military affairs commissioner, memorialized on the "Memorials Office scandal," a purely civilian matter; see HCP (1979) 153, p. 3716.

Irregular individual submitters were required to deliver two copies of their text to the Postern Office the day prior to their audience, along with a capsule biography and summary of their official career (in modern terms, a curriculum vitae).³⁰⁶ This raises the question whether the emperor had foreknowledge of the memorials that were presented to him. Kao-tsung's statement that he read audience memorials after the session strongly suggests that in many cases he had no such knowledge and that the public reading of the document was itself a formality. There were obvious time constraints on the number of memorials that could be presented. Primary sources speak not in terms of the number of individual memorials submitted but rather of the number of "groups" (*pan*) that could be accommodated in one session. This number appears to have varied considerably with each emperor, his age, and the political situation. Audiences generally began at dawn, somewhere between five and seven in the morning. In 998, Chen-tsung had finished hearing memorials by nine, then ate, and repaired to the back hall for the "second sitting" till noon, during which he did not hear memorials. In 1006, he complained that audiences were taking too long and limited submissions to five *pan*, one each from the Secretariat–Chancellery and the Military Affairs Commission, and three additional *pan* whose composition the Postern Office scheduled for each session. In 1068, Shen-tsung reduced the number of additional *pan* from three to one.³⁰⁷ Allowing an hour for initial pageantry, Chen-tsung's schedule would leave about two hours (from seven to nine) for five *pan* or about twenty-five minutes per *pan*. In 1029, however, Empress Liu and Jen-tsung heard nineteen *pan* in one session; nine before the break at nine o'clock and an additional ten before adjourning in the early afternoon.³⁰⁸ By the same calculations, this would allow only about fifteen minutes per *pan*. In the early Southern Sung, audience submissions were often limited to only two *pan*. Such constraints could have left little time for anything but a token reading of each memorial.

Critics of the audience submission system – and these included emperors themselves – lamented its rigidity and bureaucratic nature. In 1066, Emperor Ying-tsung complained that he met every day with his ministers "yet we never have time for a leisurely discussion of the principles of government but rather are constantly harassed by this plethora of documents." He ordered the Secretariat to handle more matters internally, and established a triage system: (1) on major issues, the Secretariat was to continue to "obtain the imperial will" through audience memorials; (2) on matters of detail, the Secretariat should submit a "routine petition" (*shu-chuang*) through non-audience

³⁰⁶ SHY (1966) *I-chih* 6, pp. 5a, 9a–b.

³⁰⁷ HCP (1979) 43, p. 919; SHY (1966) *I-chih* 6, p. 4b; SS (1977) 118, pp. 2785–6.

³⁰⁸ HCP (1979) 108, p. 2514.

channels for imperial approval; (3) on matters already covered by statute, the Secretariat should issue its own directives to subordinate agencies.³⁰⁹

In the late twelfth century, Chu Hsi also criticized the audience process. He confirmed that presenters were able to read only a few sentences before their time was up. There was little discussion and consequently nothing was decided; even small matters were referred down for additional consultation and recommendation, which could take months or years to complete. He made two suggestions for improvement. First, the emperor should sit behind a long table on which the presented memorial could be spread out for his immediate perusal. Second, subordinates of the presenting agency should be available in the hall for immediate consultation. In this way, if the emperor had a question, he could confer with knowledgeable parties and, on the spot, approve or deny the memorial. Chu cites a Six Dynasties precedent for this procedure and claims himself to have witnessed its effectiveness when he was provincial administrator at Chang-chou. There, no one would volunteer to speak first at staff meetings, he reported. But, if a written text was presented for comment, active discussion ensued and led to a speedy decision. In other words, the written text should be a base for oral conversation; it should not become an end in itself.³¹⁰

The general inefficiency of the audience memorial system led to several mechanisms to preserve the precedent but work around the difficulties. Most prominent was the "stay-behind" (*liu-shen*), essentially a private session accorded to a senior official, at the request either of the emperor or of the official himself. Normally, all ministers-in-attendance could request a stay-behind, but the scope of the privilege varied with the emperor. In 1118, Hui-tsung forbade stay-behind requests from anyone except Ts'ai Ching. In 1133, Kao-tsung ordered the privilege limited to State Council members.³¹¹ Eligible officials were required to request a "stay-behind" in open court; therefore, although the audience was private, the fact of its occurrence was not. Some sources suggest that these stay-behind sessions occurred at the conclusion of group presentations, in other words, between the *pan*; others suggest that they occurred mainly during the "second sitting."³¹² Tseng Pu's diary confirms that memorials submitted during stay-behind sessions were secret. On one occasion, during his own stay-behind, Tseng saw memorials left with the emperor during a stay-behind by Chief Councilor Chang Tun, and Tseng

³⁰⁹ SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 1, pp. 76b–77a; HCP (1979) 208, p. 5053. For a similar sentiment, see HCP (1979) 176, p. 4260.

³¹⁰ Li, *Chu-tzu yü-lei* 128, pp. 3068–9. ³¹¹ SS (1977) 118, p. 2787; *Yao-lu* (1988) 68, p. 1152.

³¹² See, for example, *Yao-lu* (1988) 67, p. 1142; SHY (1966) I-chih 6, pp. 15a, 16a; *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) i 2, p. 517; and Hsü Tü, *Ch'üeh-sao pien* (c. 1130; SKCS ed.) 2, p. 23b.

suspected that the emperor's questions to him concerned the contents of Chang's memorials.³¹³

Memorial and edict

Audience presentation was part of a larger system of governmental communication via memorial (in modern terms, a memo). This system funneled written documents upward through proper channels to the monarch and the chief counselor. Memorials submitted from "inside," from within the court, often served as the base text for the edicts, decrees, and orders that emanated from the offices of the monarch and the chief counselor and that counted as "law" in the Sung state.³¹⁴ Memorials submitted from "outside," from provincial authorities, provided regular reports on local conditions. In 984, all graded officials in the provinces were granted permission to memorialize through channels (that is, their memorials had to be submitted first to their superiors for eventual transmission to the court). Provincial officials above the level of prefect were permitted to address the emperor directly; those below were required to address the Secretariat–Chancellery or the Military Affairs Commission.³¹⁵ Top provincial officials were required to report regularly upon the termination of their tours or, in Southern Sung, six months after their arrival on location.³¹⁶ In 995, the secretariat drafters were ordered to screen the flow of provincial documents for those that warranted action.³¹⁷ In 1070, between 400 and 500 memorials from the provinces arrived in K'ai-feng every day.³¹⁸

There were many restrictions on how a memorial could be written and what it could contain. They had to be signed and could not be submitted anonymously. They could neither address matters outside the jurisdiction of the writer, nor request that the emperor "keep them within" or thwart court opposition to a proposed course of action. They could not request that the writer come to K'ai-feng to make his case in person.³¹⁹ Most memorials therefore concerned routine, noncontroversial matters. The edict of 984 stated that "those whose suggestions are accepted will be rewarded; those whose are not will incur no punishment."³²⁰ This specific dispensation suggests that writers often did incur formal or informal sanctions for unwelcome suggestions.

³¹³ Tseng, *Tseng-kung i-lu* 8, pp. 10a, 14a, 19a, 20a–b.

³¹⁴ For primary sources, see SHY (1966) *ti-hsi* 9, pp. 1a–33b; *I-chih* 6, pp. 1b–31a; *I-chih* 7, pp. 19a–34b.

³¹⁵ Ssu-ma Kuang in *CSW* (2006), Volume 55, p. 314.

³¹⁶ *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 6, pp. 143–4.

³¹⁷ SHY (1966) *ti-hsi* 9, pp. 1b, 3a; HCP (1979) 25, 581; 37, p. 810.

³¹⁸ SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 2, p. 39b. ³¹⁹ SHY (1966) *ti-hsi* 9, pp. 5a–7b.

³²⁰ HCP (1979) 25, p. 581.

As we have seen above, the legal base for the purges of the late eleventh century rested largely upon written submissions to the court. In a system where negative reports could generate Censorate investigations and endanger the career advancement of all officials in the chain of command, it took a very brave or a very foolhardy soul to submit a critical memorial or even one that suggested a new way of doing things. So rare, in fact, were such memorials that the emperor sometimes designated when they were permitted. Natural disasters, negative astrological phenomena, or military crises often precipitated these calls for criticism. Edicts "seeking speakers" (*ch'iu-yen*) or efforts to "widen the speakers' way" (*kuang yen-lu*) often stipulated that the writers would suffer no sanctions for their criticism. But there was no "law" to protect the "speaker" and no guarantee that a future administration would not use the text against its writer.³²¹

There were two forms of memorial. Ministers-in-attendance and officials with "senior director" status (about eighty officials) were entitled to use the "administrative memorial" (*cha-tzu*); all others used the "submitted petition" (*tsou-chuang*).³²² The former was confined to senior court administrators, former chief councilors, and top provincial officials on urgent matters. Differences in the color of paper, the number of characters per line, signing protocols, and routing distinguished the two forms. Either form of memorial could be submitted either sealed (*shih-feng*) or unsealed (*t'ung-feng*). The former was used when the official himself reported or was ordered to report on secret or urgent matters, natural disasters or anomalies, and legal issues. Sealed memorials went directly to the emperor. An unsealed memorial was used for all other matters and contained a summary of its contents written on the outside of the envelope. The penalty for unwarranted use of the sealed memorial was 100 blows of the bamboo rod.³²³

The transmission, copying, and distribution of memorials and edicts were a major enterprise at the capital and involved several agencies. The Capital Memorials Office (*Tu chin-tsou yüan*) was located just outside the Great Inner and served as a central post office and copy center for the inward receipt of memorials from the provinces and the subsequent outward distribution of edicts. Descended from a T'ang agency that housed capital liaisons between the court and the provincial governors, at its founding in 982 the office

³²¹ For texts relating to these issues, see the section entitled "Widening the speakers' way," in Chao, *Sung-ch'ao chu-ch'ien tsou-i*, Chapters 18–19. Anonymous, *Sung ta chao-ling chi*, Chapters 167–8, "seeking speakers," no longer survive.

³²² SHY (1966) *I-chih* 7, pp. 30b–31a. For a petition template, see Hsieh, *Ch'ing-yüan t'iao-fa shih-lei* 16, p. 234. Chu Hsi was sanctioned, and wrote an abject apology, for using an "administrative memorial" when he was entitled only to use a "submitted petition." See Chu, *Chu Hsi chi* 22, p. 908.

³²³ Hsieh, *Ch'ing-yüan t'iao-fa shih-lei* 16, pp. 230–1.

already employed 200 clerks and scribes under the general supervision of the Secretariat–Chancellery. The same office also distributed a daily administrative gazette (*ti-pao*) that reprinted appointment and promotion notices, texts of important edicts and memorials, and general court news of interest to officials.³²⁴ After receipt and cataloguing, the memorials were transferred to the Transmission Office (*Yin-t'ai ssu*) within the palace. This office logged the memorials once again, sorted them, and routed them to their ultimate destinations: emperor, Secretariat–Chancellery, Military Affairs, or Finance. If the memorial was unsealed and addressed to the emperor, copies were made and distributed to relevant agencies.³²⁵ Provincial memorials destined for the emperor were finally delivered to the Memorial Presentation Office (*T'ung-chin ssu*), where they were combined with those from court officials who deposited their memorials in person at the Postern Office. A eunuch-staffed agency, the Memorial Presentation Office was between 993 and 1082 under joint supervision with the Transmission Office and co-ordinated the flow of paperwork to and from the emperor.³²⁶

The above network was for memorials submitted through regular channels. There is evidence that both provincial and court officials sought to avoid oversight as well as the delays and information leaks that often resulted from submission through the Capital Memorials Office. An edict of 1126, for example, forbade provincial officials from submitting memorials through the Palace Eunuch Service. This action suggests that such officials hoped, through eunuch intermediaries, to bypass the preliminary offices and slip their texts directly into the document flow to the emperor through the Memorial Presentation Office.³²⁷ Another text of the same period hints at a similar strategy. The various “drum offices” were transmittal agencies for petitions for redress of injustices from officials and the general populace – topics that precluded use of regular channels – and from lower-ranking officials with no other avenue for submission.³²⁸ However, Ch'ao Yüeh-chih (1059–1129) relates in his memoirs that there was a fee of 2,000 cash payable to every official on the drum office staff who handled the petition and that the total cost per submission averaged between 10,000 and 20,000 cash. A submission to the drum office

³²⁴ SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 2, pp. 44a–51b; HCP (1979) 23, p. 529. On the gazette, see the fine study by Chu Chuan-yü, *Sung-tai hsin-wen shih* (Taipei, 1967), pp. 14–66; there is also a useful English digest, “A history of Chinese journalism in the Sung dynasty,” *Synopses of Monographical Studies on Chinese History and Social Science* No. 5 (October 1969), pp. 67–88.

³²⁵ SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 2, pp. 37a–38b.

³²⁶ SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 2, pp. 26a–36a; HCP (1979) 34, p. 752.

³²⁷ SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 2, p. 47a.

³²⁸ These were the Public Petitioners Drum Office (*Teng-wen ku-yüan*) and the Public Petitioners Review Office (*Teng-wen chien-yüan*). See SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 3, pp. 62a–74b; SS (1977) 161, p. 3782; for the complex relationship between the two agencies, see Kung, *Sung-shih chib-kuan-chib pu-cheng*, pp. 30–1.

also required a guarantor, although this requirement seems to have been abolished in 1133.³²⁹ Since this sum represented the average monthly salary of a mid-level court official, many sought alternative channels. Most popular was to use connections among the emperor's female palace staff to bypass even the Memorial Presentation Office.³³⁰

Once the imperial will had been determined, an edict was formulated and promulgated for implementation. The *Sung history* lists seven categories of imperial edict, classified in a hierarchy according to the importance of the topic and the status of the person or group to whom it was directed.³³¹ The category determined where the edict was composed. The emperor's academicians (*hsüeh-shih*) composed the highest categories. The chief councilors and other State Council members or their staffs composed the lesser categories. In the early Sung, the emperor simply marked his approval on the submitted memorial and returned it to the relevant agency. In 990, however, all approved memorials were routed through the Secretariat–Chancellery, the Military Affairs Commission, or the Finance Commission, as appropriate, where an edict text was composed. Tseng Pu's diary, for example, records that after audiences he "composed the imperial will" (*tso sbeng-chih*) both individually and with other members of the State Council.³³² Once these drafts were complete, these agencies then "re-memorialized" (*fu-tsou*) for permission to promulgate the final text.³³³

"Directed edicts" (*nei-chiang*, also *chung-chih*, *nei-p'i*), as mentioned above, were edicts generated within the monarchy itself and issued directly to the relevant agency. They often concerned appointments for relatives of palace women and eunuch requisitions for palace supplies. Depending on the period and the emperor, directed edicts may or may not have been routed through the Secretariat.³³⁴ In order to forestall abuse, Emperor Jen-tsung in 1059 authorized an agency that received a directed edict to delay its implementation for one day and to submit to him a subsequent "retained memorial" (*chih-tsou*, also *tsou-ping*) to verify that the directed edict indeed reflected his intention.³³⁵ Directed edicts were not uncommon. In 1082, Ts'ai Ching completed a collection that dated from 1067 through 1079 and included 1,346 such edicts,

³²⁹ *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 8, p. 158.

³³⁰ Ch'ao Yüeh-chih, *Ch'ao-shih k'o-yü*, quoted in *Yung-lo ta-tien*, ed. Chieh Chin et al. (1408; Peking, 1986) 9762, p. 6b.

³³¹ *SS* (1977) 161, p. 3783. ³³² Tseng, *Tseng-kung i-lu* 8, pp. 23a, 24a.

³³³ *HCP* (1979) 31, p. 708. This precedent was often restated, for example, in 1177. See Chou Pi-ta, *Erb-lao t'ang tsa-chih* (TSCC ed.) 3, p. 1b; Lau, "The absolutist reign of Sung Hsiao-tsung," pp. 99–100.

³³⁴ Chao, *Ch'ao-yeh lei-yao* 3, p. 68.

³³⁵ *SS* (1977) 12, p. 230; Wen-ying, *Hsü Hsiang-shan yeh-lu*, ed. Cheng Shih-kang and Yang Li-yang (c.1073; Peking, 1984), p. 68.

an average of more than one every three days.³³⁶ The “retain memorial” was an important tool in the literati struggle against imperially dispensed patronage. In 1193, for example, Chief Councilor Liu Cheng (1129–1206) received a directed edict to appoint one of Emperor Kuang-tsung’s affinal relatives to office. Liu objected with a “retain memorial.” When the emperor refused to accept the memorial, Liu left both documents on the emperor’s divan and left the audience.³³⁷

The Yüan-feng reforms of 1082 – especially separation of the Secretariat and the Chancellery and reconstitution of the Department of State Affairs – introduced major changes that affected how edicts were composed and promulgated. Emperor Shen-tsung, as described above, attempted to create three equal “departments” (Secretariat, Chancellery, and State Affairs) headed by two chief councilors, one “left” who was also concurrent head of the Chancellery – the “Chancellery Councilor” – and one “right” who was also concurrent head of the Secretariat – the “Secretariat Councilor.” With each of the three departments performing a distinct and separate function, the new organization was to work in the following way. (1) On important matters, the Secretariat, after consultation with the emperor in audience, “composed the imperial will” on yellow stationery; these drafts were called “approved yellows” (*bua-huang*). For lesser matters, the Secretariat submitted non-audience “routine petitions,” which, after imperial approval (*bua*), were transcribed as “recorded yellows” (*lu-huang*). The Military Affairs Commission followed a similar procedure, but used white stationery. (2) These drafts were then forwarded to the Chancellery, where the “yellows” were kept as base copies. After checking for errors, these drafts were again recopied and submitted to the emperor for final approval (*bua-wen*), a process known as “re-memorializing” (*fu-tsou*). The “approved yellows” were then again recopied and submitted to the Supervising Secretary for final Chancellery clearance. (3) At this point, the document became an “edict” (*ch’ih*), bore the signatures of both chief councilors and other Secretariat and Chancellery personnel, and was transmitted to State Affairs for recording, distribution, and implementation.³³⁸

In addition to creating the three separate departments, the Yüan-feng reorganization also enhanced the authority of the Secretariat drafters to “return” imperial scripts, a practice that, as seen above, was first employed in the late 1030s. Also known as “return for correction” (*feng-po*), Shen-tsung extended

³³⁶ HCP (1979) 328, p. 7897.

³³⁷ Hsü, *Sung tsai-fu pien-nien lu* 19, p. 1273 quotes this account from the biography of Liu composed by Lin Ta-chung (1131–1208); in SS (1977) 391, p. 11975, the narrative is considerably less dramatic.

³³⁸ HCP (1979) 323, pp. 7775–6; SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 1, pp. 19b–20b; SS (1977) 161, p. 3776; there are many descriptions in secondary literature, for example Chu, *Sung-tai*, pp. 115, 161–2.

this authority to the Supervising Secretaries in the Chancellery. Both the Secretariat and the Chancellery now had key officials empowered to detain documents. Shen-tsung also physically separated these officials with "return authority" in the Secretariat Rear Section and Chancellery Rear Section, where they became supervisory officials. These measures gave the Secretariat drafters, for whom there were six billets in the Secretariat Rear Section, and the Supervising Secretaries, for whom there were four billets in the Chancellery Rear Section, a certain measure of independence from the chief councilors. They were empowered to return to its source any document they found wanting either for technical reasons or on grounds of content, including personnel appointments, policy deliberations, and legal matters.

The division of the Secretariat and Chancellery also entailed a new audience protocol. Before 1082, all chief councilors, as supervisory officials of the combined Secretariat-Chancellery, memorialized together as one "group." Shen-tsung, however, insisted that, as heads of the new Chancellery and Secretariat, the left and right chief councilors memorialize during audience in two separate groups. His intention was to balance the two councilors against each other, an intention also apparent in the "checks and balances" built into the relationship between the three departments.

There was, however, a major flaw in Shen-tsung's design. The left "Chancellery Councilor," with control over the important ministries of Personnel and Justice, was intended as the senior of the two councilors, yet only the right "Secretariat Councilor" had authority to initiate policy by "obtaining the imperial will." The Chancellery had a powerful oversight function, yet it could not memorialize on new initiatives. This organization forced the two chief councilors to co-operate. Yet, if they did not, it produced instant gridlock. In the early Southern Sung, Yeh Meng-te (1077-1148) penned a trenchant critique of this original Yüan-feng design. When the councilors agreed on an issue, they requested permission to memorialize together. This made the oversight function of the Chancellery superfluous, since the initial consensus already signaled the concurrence of the Chancellery Councilor. When they did not agree, the Chancellery was required to "return for correction" through the Secretariat. The Secretariat Councilor would then often detain the matter rather than negotiate a compromise. Rather than effecting a balance between the two councilors, the Yüan-feng reform set them at institutional loggerheads, and the Secretariat Councilor, the junior partner, had the bureaucratic advantage over his senior colleague. Thus the Secretariat soon became the most powerful of the three departments, and Shen-tsung's design was thwarted almost from inception.³³⁹

³³⁹ Yeh, *Shih-lin yen-yü* 3, pp. 39-40.

Already in late 1082, Shen-tsung exempted from Chancellery review documents that involved military activity on the borders.³⁴⁰ As soon as Shen-tsung died in 1085, Ssu-ma Kuang and Lü Kung-tso (1018–89) requested from Empress Kao, and were granted, permission for the chief councilors to jointly memorialize. As Lü maintained, “we are all in the same boat crossing the stream,” implying that the oversight function of the Chancellery was superfluous in a unified administration.³⁴¹ Ssu-ma Kuang went further and advocated a recombination of the Secretariat and Chancellery. His son submitted his memorial posthumously in 1089. It was not acted upon at the time but is among the most revealing political documents of the age and served as the foundation for the eventual recombination of the two agencies in 1129.³⁴²

Ssu-ma objected to the excessive delay and paperwork that the round-robin nature of continual deliberation and consultation produced:

All directed edicts, petitions, and reports submitted from whatever source that reach the Chancellery and Secretariat must first be routed to State Affairs. From there, they are sent down to the Six Ministries, where they are referred to their subsections for further review, investigation of related documents, and meetings to discuss details. Either in the capital or in the provinces, when everything is complete, the matter returns to State Affairs for policy deliberations and a determination. State Affairs then forwards the matter to the Secretariat, where one obtains the imperial will, which is then sent to the Chancellery for rememorializing and final approval by the emperor. Then copies are made for State Affairs, sent to the Six Ministries, and from there back to the original source.

Ssu-ma argued that the authority to “return for correction” in the Chancellery was redundant and created tension among the top officials. “It serves no purpose except to double the number of clerks and multiply paperwork.”³⁴³

The autocratic councilor

The autocratic councilor, or in Chinese terms the “weighted minister” (*ch'üan-ch'en*), featured prominently in Sung political life. Certainly, dynasties both before and after Sung had their share of autocratic politicians. But the Sung was unique in Chinese history for the long periods when sole councilors dominated the political scene and for the dynasty's repeated return to this pattern of political organization. “Sole councilor” (*tu-hsiang*) refers to a political circumstance in which, instead of the statutory two or three, there was only one chief councilor. During the 316 years of Sung rule, almost half, or precisely 145 years, were periods when only one chief councilor held the office. In

³⁴⁰ SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 2, p. 4a.

³⁴¹ HCP (1979) 358, p. 8561; *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 10, p. 196.

³⁴² Yao-lu (1988) 22, pp. 474–5.

³⁴³ CSW (2006), Volume 55, pp. 313–16; also HCP (1979) 431, pp. 10408–13.

the Northern Sung, sixteen of the seventy-two men who served in the office functioned for a time as sole councilor. These periods constituted 37 percent of the time between 960 and 1126. Twenty-two of the sixty-one councilors in Southern Sung served as sole councilor, equivalent to 62 percent of the years between 1127 and 1276.³⁴⁴ Writing in the early Yüan, Wang Ying-lin, the last of the great Sung scholars, directly attributed the fall of his dynasty to the increasing periods of autocratic rule by sole councilors.³⁴⁵

Traditional – and most modern – historians treat the issue of autocratic rule in moral terms. The *Sung history* of 1345 gathered the biographies of many of these councilors in a section entitled “nefarious ministers” (*chien-ch'en*). Ou-yang Hsiu devised this historical category in the mid-eleventh century for his *New T'ang history* (*Hsin T'ang-shu*), a creation not unrelated to the increasingly partisan politics of his own day. The *Tao-hsiieh* movement in late Southern Sung turned this concept into a guiding principle for the telling of Sung history and determined which councilors were to be included in the category.³⁴⁶ Political figures consigned to this “nefarious” category were “petty men” (*hsiao-jen*) who acted from base and selfish motives at the expense of the sovereign and the state.³⁴⁷ The most prominent “nefarious ministers” in the *Sung history* are Chang Tun, Ts'ai Ching, Ch'in Kuei, Han T'o-chou (1152–1207), and Chia Ssu-tao (1213–75).

However, if one leaves aside the *Tao-hsiieh* compulsion to explain the past as an eternal morality play, and examines the Sung propensity for autocratic councilors from an institutional standpoint, a rather different picture emerges. There is a strong relation between the Yüan-feng reforms and the rise of the sole councilor. The first period of long-term sole councilorship, that of Chang Tun, alone in office from 1094 through 1100, began little more than a decade after the Yüan-feng reforms. Some evidence suggests that Emperor Shen-tsung, perhaps with his past experience with Wang An-shih in mind, forced the separation of the Secretariat–Chancellery, with its counterpoised left and right councilors, in order to check the growing power of the chief councilors and to restrain the political factionalism that arose in the wake of the New Policies. Li Ch'ing-ch'en (1032–1102), a major contemporary politician, once remarked, “in his late years Shen-tsung set up the three departments so he could divide the authority of the councilors and have them watch and check on each other. These were farsighted plans.”³⁴⁸

³⁴⁴ For these statistics and details, see Lin T'ien-wei, “Chün-ch'üan chung, hsiang-ch'üan to, shih-fou mao-tun,” in Lin T'ien-wei, *Sung-tai shih-shih chih-i* (Taipei, 1987), pp. 34–89, esp. 35–9.

³⁴⁵ Wang Ying-lin, *K'un-hsiieh chi-wen* (SKCS ed.) 15, pp. 12b–13a.

³⁴⁶ See Hartman, “The making of a villain,” pp. 105–46.

³⁴⁷ For this characterization, see the introduction to the “nefarious ministers” chapters in the *Sung history*: SS (1977) 471, p. 13697.

³⁴⁸ Wang Kung, *Wen-chien chin-lu* (TSCC ed.), p. 28b.

Most modern historians, following Chu Hsi, note that Shen-tsung pushed through the Yüan-feng reforms against the advice of senior advisers, including the retired Wang An-shih.³⁴⁹ But, as early as 1058, Jen-tsung had appointed a commission to study proposals for institutional reform. A comparison of the commission's findings and Shen-tsung's 1082 reforms is revealing. Shen-tsung adopted many of the commission's suggestions, including the creation of the three departments, but with two striking exceptions. The earlier commission had advocated abolishing the Military Affairs Commission and moving its functions into the Secretariat and the Six Ministries, a move Shen-tsung refused to consider. It had also recommended a looser, "corporate" definition of the chief councilorship, rather similar to the existing mid-century State Council than to the rigidly defined, interlocking roles that Shen-tsung eventually imposed.³⁵⁰ Both these aspects of Shen-tsung's 1082 reform sought to exert the power of the monarch over that of the chief councilors. When Li Ch'ing-ch'ên commented that Shen-tsung's plans were "farsighted," the immediate political backdrop was Chang Tun's sole councilorship. In other words, Shen-tsung's reforms precipitated precisely what they had been intended to prevent: the concentration of too much power in the hands of one official.

As the above description of the document flow through the three departments illustrates, the reforms created institutional gridlock if the chief councilors did not agree. Despite Empress Kao's reluctance to undo her son's reforms, she acquiesced almost immediately – perhaps from simple bureaucratic necessity – in ways to circumvent the problems they created. In 1086, Wen Yen-po was named "manager of vital military and national issues" (*p'ing-chang chün-kuo chung shih*). This was an old T'ang designation that conferred upon Wen an honorary, elder-statesman status but theoretically ranked him above the chief councilors Ssu-ma Kuang and Lü Kung-tso. Two years later, however, Empress Kao named Lü Kung-tso, then Right Chief Councilor, "manager of military and national issues" (*p'ing-chang chün-kuo shih*). In the opinion of the greatest of Southern Sung historians, this simple omission of the graph "vital" from his title afforded Lü total control over all matters in the three departments and the Military Affairs Commission.³⁵¹ He became in effect a super-councilor with authority to transcend the limitations that the Yüan-feng reform had imposed on regular councilors. In the view of his adversaries, the man who three years earlier had said "we're all in the same boat"

³⁴⁹ Li, *Chu-tzu yü-lei* 128, p. 3070; Chu, *Sung-tai*, pp. 180–1. For a thoughtful study of the Yüan-feng reform, see Kung Yen-ming, "Pei-Sung Yüan-feng kuan-chih kai-ke lun," *Chung-kuo shih yen-chiu* No. 1 (1990), pp. 132–43.

³⁵⁰ HCP (1979) 188, pp. 4536–8.

³⁵¹ *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) i 13, pp. 710–11; also HCP (1979) 409, pp. 9963–5; Hsü, *Sung tsai-fu pien-nien lu* 9, pp. 573–4; SS (1977) 336, p. 10776.

had managed to commandeer the entire fleet. Although Lü died the following year, subsequent “nefarious ministers,” such as Han T’o-chou, cited the precedent that Lü had created to justify their own accumulation of extraordinary authority. After the dismissal of Ts’ai Ching in 1125, a long edict restored the original 1082 configuration of the three departments and specifically stated that Lü Kung-tso had begun the deformation of those institutions in 1088.³⁵²

Most historians dismiss Hui-tsung’s rule from 1100 through 1125 as a time of stagnation and moral decline – in short, as prelude to the debacle of 1126. Accordingly, the period is little studied. But this quarter-century was pivotal to the development of Sung political institutions. It marked both a culmination of trends set in motion since the mid-eleventh century and laid groundwork for the political structures of the ensuing Southern Sung. Hui-tsung’s reign witnessed the struggle between two competing notions of government. On the one hand, as outlined above, Ou-yang Hsiu, Ssu-ma Kuang, and colleagues promoted a government of closely interlinked agencies, each with a carefully described function, each headed by *shih ta-fu*, their interaction regulated through an elaborate balance of function, with strong oversight powers accorded to the remonstrance agencies. Ou-yang Hsiu’s chapters on institutions in the *New T’ang history* illustrate aspects of this concept. Emperor Shen-tsung basically accepted this vision, but, in an effort to defend the monarchy against the growing power of the literati, he pushed the concept to the extreme, and created gridlock and disjunction.

On the other hand, in 1069 Shen-tsung allowed Wang An-shih to form the Bureau for the Implementation of Fiscal Regulations (Finance Planning Commission) as an ad hoc agency to co-ordinate and streamline the New Policies. In defense of the new bureau, Wang An-shih noted in exasperation, “At present, if the Secretariat needs to pay for anything that costs more than 100 cash, it must proceed through Finance Commission clerks, who then memorialize before the funds are disbursed.”³⁵³ His opponents, however, saw more sinister motives. Han Ch’i (1008–75) objected that there was no precedent in Sung history for an agency that decided issues outside the Secretariat and without memorializing. “One has here a ‘Secretariat’ that is beyond the jurisdiction of the Secretariat.”³⁵⁴ Although short-lived, the bureau created a powerful precedent for an alternative vision of how government could work. The emperor, in close collaboration with one trusted adviser, rules through temporary and fluid bureaucratic substructures that largely bypass the elaborate organization chart of established government. Essentially, as Han Ch’i foresaw, the

³⁵² SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 1, pp. 42a–44a, esp. p. 43a. This edict specifically charges that Lü Kung-tso had colluded with the other ministers to remove the graph “vital” from his title and so claim authority over all governmental matters.

³⁵³ Yang, *Tzu-chih t’ung-chien ch’ang-pien chi-shih pen-mo* 66, p. 5a.

³⁵⁴ SHY (1966) *shih-buo* 4, p. 29a.

emperor allows one adviser to create a government within the government. Clerks, not *shih ta-fu*, staff these governmental substructures. Emperor Hui-tsung and Ts'ai Ching developed this model during the first quarter of the twelfth century because it offered a powerful promise of better efficiency and filled the bureaucratic void left by gridlock of the regular system.

Ts'ai Ching proposed the Advisory Office (*Chiang-i ssu*) as early as 1094 and specifically cited its 1069 precedent.³⁵⁵ Formed in 1102 to re-establish the New Policies, the office was divided into seven units, each charged with devising and implementing solutions in a specific problem area: the imperial clan, state finance, commerce, salt production, tax collection, the excessive number of officials, and livestock management. Ts'ai Ching headed the office with the adjunct title of Supervisor of the Advisory Office (*Ti-chü Chiang-i ssu*) appended to his title as chief councilor. He established a sub-office in the Military Affairs Commission, headed by his brother, Ts'ai Pien (1058–1117), to co-ordinate with that agency. He staffed the central headquarters with seven trusted lieutenants, appointed three officials on temporary assignment from other agencies to head each subunit, and provided the whole with a support staff of several hundred clerks.³⁵⁶ The Advisory Office could also dispatch personnel to the provinces to overrule local officials and oversee implementation of its policies. Viewed against the backdrop of both pre- and post-1082 organization charts, the Advisory Office was unorthodox. Staffed by carefully chosen officials assembled to solve specific problems, the office sliced through traditional bureaucratic lines of authority with a power that Ts'ai Ching derived from his unique association with Hui-tsung. In 1104, Ts'ai Ching and Ts'ai Pien closed the office, claiming that its goals had been accomplished. This fact suggests the office was not, as is commonly portrayed in secondary literature, a vehicle for building Ts'ai's personal clique, but rather a temporary mechanism to expedite a complex policy agenda.

The popular image of Hui-tsung's reign as one long period of political decline and autocracy is misleading. Ts'ai Ching served four times as chief councilor: he was appointed four times, but also dismissed four times. The new conception of streamlined government faced constant opposition from many quarters, mainly from those officials who were cut from the loop.³⁵⁷ Hui-tsung's vacillation toward Ts'ai Ching mirrors this opposition. In 1122 Wang Fu (1079–1126) established the ad hoc Frontier Defense Office (*Ching-fu fang*) to circumvent the Military Affairs Commission and co-ordinate

³⁵⁵ For primary sources, see SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 5, pp. 12a–18b; Yang, *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien chi-shih pen-mo* 132, pp. 1a–12a. For an organizational summary, see Kung, *Sung-tai kuan-chih tz'u-tien*, pp. 190–1.

³⁵⁶ Tseng, *Tu-hsing tsa-chih* 9, p. 67. ³⁵⁷ On this point, see Hung, *Jung-chai ssu-pi* 15, pp. 785–6.

the alliance with the Jurchen against the Liao. His long proposal to establish this office reveals that many of the 1082 checks and balances built into the relationship among the three departments were still in force.³⁵⁸ As late as spring 1126, after the retreat of the Jurchen army from the first siege of K'ai-feng, certain officials, including the subsequent *Tao-hsiieh* paragon Li Kang (1083–1140), revived the Advisory Office as a last-ditch effort to co-ordinate policy against the Jurchen. But the Remonstrator Ch'en Kung-fu (1077–1142) objected that the organization was unorthodox and violated mid-eleventh-century models. Other officials called the idea “a joke” (*k'o-hsiao*): “We submit that each of the Six Ministries of the Department of State Affairs should attend to its own affairs, then forward their documents to the Secretariat to obtain the imperial will.”³⁵⁹ Less than a year later, the Jurchen invaded the capital for a second time, and the Northern Sung came to an end.

As we have seen above, when Emperor Kao-tsung revamped the central administration in 1129, he adopted Ssu-ma Kuang's plea to recombine the Secretariat and Chancellery and brought back the post of assistant chief counselor. But he retained the Six Ministries under the Department of State Affairs, in essence combining elements from both pre- and post-1082 organizations. However, the first counselor appointed to the new post, Lü I-hao (1071–1139), also held adjunct appointment as imperial defense commissioner (*yü-ying shih*). The Imperial Defense Command had been created as an emergency, unified military command following the collapse of the Northern Sung army in 1127.³⁶⁰ In 1130, however, censors attacked Lü for using the agency as a personal power base, and he was dismissed from office.³⁶¹ The Imperial Defense Command was reborn as the Office for Emergencies (*Chi-su fang*). A central clearing house for military correspondence with frontline forces, this office was designed to circumvent the delays and leaks that ensued if these documents were processed through the Military Affairs Commission. The Office for Emergencies became a standard component of sole-counselor rule: Han T'o-chou established one in his own residence in 1205, and Chia Ssu-tao established another within the Secretariat in 1273.³⁶²

It is also misleading to view the sole ministers – even the “nefarious ministers” – as usurpers of imperial authority. The *Tao-hsiieh* historians created the chimera of usurpation to absolve the imperial house of responsibility for failed initiatives, and eventually for the fall of Southern Sung, under the sole

³⁵⁸ SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 1, pp. 38b–40a. On the Frontier Defense Office, see SS (1977) 161, p. 3793; and the commentary in Kung, *Sung-shih chih-kuan-chih pu-cheng*, pp. 48–9, which makes clear that the office was established within the Secretariat and attempted to evade oversight from other State Council members.

³⁵⁹ SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 5, pp. 19a–20a.

³⁶⁰ Yao-lu (1988) 5, pp. 123–4. ³⁶¹ *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 10, p. 197.

³⁶² Yao-lu (1988) 68, p. 1153; 85, pp. 1401–2; Lin, “*Chün-ch'üan chung . . .*,” pp. 69–72.

councilors. But in every case, these councilors, as established in the example of Shen-tsung and Wang An-shih, worked in close collaboration with the monarch. Often a sovereign turned to the sole councilor, and to his fluid administrative arrangements, as the only alternative to the ever-feuding *shih ta-fu* and regular bureaucratic paralysis. The relationship between Emperor Kao-tsung and Ch'in Kuei, the first great sole councilor in the Southern Sung mold, presents the clearest example. Early in his reign, Kao-tsung struck a balance between the competing forms of government structure, revived the Censorate and policy critics, and laid ground rules for proper bureaucratic documentation. But the endless bureaucratic feuding of the 1130s drove him in desperation to Ch'in Kuei, and once that decision was made, Kao-tsung stuck with his choice, as Ch'in Kuei negotiated the 1142 peace with the Jurchen, built the new capital at Lin-an (Hang-chou), and laid the economic foundation for the restored Sung state.³⁶³

These accomplishments were achieved through a wholehearted embrace of the Hui-tsung/Ts'ai Ching model of government, where fluid bureaucratic substructures circumvented routine government organization. In this context, no document in Sung political history reveals more than Hung Mai's note on Southern Sung staffing levels in the Six Ministries. He relates that in the mid-1150s, during the last years of Ch'in Kuei's administration, there was exactly one regularly appointed, graded official in the entire twenty-four subunits of the Six Ministries – a director (*lang-chung*) in the Ministry of Justice named Sun Min-hsiu. The entire Ministry of Personnel was run by a clerk named Chang Yün.³⁶⁴

Hung Mai links these stunning statistics to Ch'in Kuei's disdain for the regular bureaucracy: "the longer he was in office, the more he disliked having graded officials (*shih ta-fu*) at court." This preference for administration through clerks rather than through graded officials pervades descriptions of Southern Sung government. From the viewpoint of the monarch and his sole minister, a clerical administration was more reliable, stable, and malleable than its official alternative. But, from the viewpoint of the regular bureaucracy, this predilection for "clerks and petty men" frustrated their careers and so instigated contemporary invective against Ch'in Kuei and other sole councilors. As we have seen above, career success under the Sung personnel system depended on regular advance through established channels of promotion. By not filling mid-level billets in the Six Ministries, Ch'in Kuei effectively blocked the advance of potential critics and possible adversaries into higher office.³⁶⁵

³⁶³ See Hartman, "The making of a villain," pp. 64–8.

³⁶⁴ Hung, *Jung-chai san-pi* 5, pp. 473–4.

³⁶⁵ Yao-lu (1988) 169, pp. 2772–3; Hartman, "The making of a villain," pp. 110, 133. For Ts'ai Ching's love of clerks, see also the above citation, Tseng, *Tu-hsing tsa-chih* 9, p. 67.

This Southern Sung reliance on clerical administration had origins in Northern Sung attempts to reduce clerical corruption and inefficiency by removing the boundaries between lower-level officials and the higher orders of clerks. Officials as intellectually divergent as Wang An-shih and Su Shih offered suggestions on how to achieve this goal, but it was Wang who was credited – or blamed – with the first concrete steps in this direction. He maintained that in antiquity there had been no distinction between the two groups and therefore “officials and clerks should be as one.”³⁶⁶ In a move to effect this union, Wang created in 1070 the position of examiner (*chien-cheng*) to monitor the document flow in and out of the Secretariat–Chancellery subunits and to act as liaison between the chief councilor and the clerical staff.³⁶⁷ Abolished in 1130, the examiners were restored by Ch’in Kuei during his first tenure as chief councilor in 1132. Chang Tun, the first of the sole councilors in the 1090s, served as examiner in the early 1070s, as did Tseng Pu.³⁶⁸ Although official biographies rarely speak to such issues, one may surmise that these years of apprenticeship under Wang An-shih afforded Chang and other leaders of the next generation a detailed, working knowledge of the clerical world and how it could be mobilized.

The dividing line between the clerical and the official worlds was in fact more permeable than many secondary sources suggest. In the early Sung, senior Secretariat clerks (*t’ang-hou kuan*, literally, “officials behind the hall”) had been graded positions.³⁶⁹ Sung personnel statutes contained provisions for the transfer of such clerks to graded status, although promotion caps known as the “laws of halt” limited their advance into the highest ranks of officialdom.³⁷⁰ Yeh Shih observed that, although the Yüan-feng reforms had produced a surge in the number of central-government clerks, the real transformation resulted from the liberal policies adopted toward clerical transfers into graded status for senior clerks during the Hui-tsung years.³⁷¹ Ts’ai Ching not only expedited such transfers but ignored the “laws of halt” of the Yüan-feng period that prohibited these officials from advancing into graded

³⁶⁶ HCP (1979) 237, pp. 5764–5; also James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien), *Reform in Sung China: Wang An-shih (1021–1086) and his new policies* (Cambridge, MA, 1959), pp. 80–5; Su Shih, *Ching-chin Tung-p’o wen-chi shih-liieh*, ed. P’ang Shih-chou (Hong Kong, 1979), pp. 578–9.

³⁶⁷ HCP (1979) 215, p. 5230; Yeh, *Shih-lin yen-yü* 9, p. 138. For primary sources, see SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 3, pp. 46a–48b. On how the tug-of-war between monarch and chief councilor often frustrated the careers of the examiners, see Wang, *Yen-i i-mou lu* 4, p. 31.

³⁶⁸ SS (1977) 471, p. 13710.

³⁶⁹ Liu, “The Sung views on the control of government clerks,” pp. 321–2. For a fine study of Sung clerks, see Umehara, *Sōdai kanryō seido kenkyū*, pp. 501–620.

³⁷⁰ *Ch’ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 12, p. 250; SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 3, p. 30a.

³⁷¹ Yeh, *Yeh Shih chi*, pp. 808–9. As early as 1086, Shang-kuan Chün complained of clerical overstaffing in the Six Ministries; see HCP (1979) 386, pp. 9405–7.

positions high enough to confer *yin* privilege.³⁷² In essence, he allowed clerks to become officials and then to confer official status upon their sons. This policy contributed to the oversupply of officials in the late Northern Sung. More importantly, it produced many graded officials in early Southern Sung who had not entered officialdom through the examination system but were “clerks and petty men.” This fact is fundamental to understanding the difference between Northern and Southern Sung government and the propensity of the latter for sole councilors.

The bureaucratic chaos that resulted from the loss of court archives and relocation of the capital to Hang-chou during the late 1120s and early 1130s enhanced the power of the clerks. Their collective memory and their private copies of statute books and personnel records were major sources for rebuilding the documentary base of the restored dynasty.³⁷³ In 1127, when the new Emperor Kao-tsung established his temporary court at Yang-chou (in Huai-nan-tung circuit), only 258 clerks reported for duty. He promoted them, and, within two years, their numbers swelled quickly. The reconfiguration of the central government in 1129 established clerical quotas as follows: Secretariat-Chancellery 238, central State Affairs 204, the Six Ministries 920, and the Military Affairs Commission 327.³⁷⁴ As soon as he began his second term as chief councilor in 1138, Ch'in Kuei authorized the addition of “above-quota” clerks in central-government agencies and in the provinces.³⁷⁵ When he died in 1155, there were 4,000 clerks alone in the seven prefectures of Che-tung circuit (Liang-che-tung circuit). Steps were taken to reduce this number by half, but “private clerks,” off-quota personnel in the private employ of local officials, multiplied tenfold and “were a horrible bane to the people.”³⁷⁶

As soon as he ascended the throne, Emperor Hsiao-tsung ordered a 20 percent reduction in clerical staffing at central-government agencies and forbade the practice of adding “above-quota” clerks.³⁷⁷ By 1168, the numbers of clerks

³⁷² SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 3, pp. 29a–30a; these texts, dated 1116, document the degree of integration between clerks and graded officials during this period. Ma Tuan-lin, *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* (c. 1308; Taipei, 1965) 35, p. 333c, states that, in the first decade of the twelfth century, Ts'ai Ching permitted clerical transfers into the regular bureaucracy to advance to senior director grade (*Chung-feng ta-fu*) and to serve as provincial commissioners: “As a result, the numbers of their sons who entered the service through *yin* privilege increased a hundredfold.” I have found no earlier source for this passage, but its general tenor accords with the sentiments of the SHY documents.

³⁷³ For examples, see Yao-lu (1988) 36, p. 685; *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia*, 5, p. 120; and Liu, “The Sung views on the control of government clerks,” p. 334.

³⁷⁴ Yao-lu (1988) 22, p. 475; for a detailed list of the revised quotas of 1131 see SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 3, pp. 30b–31a.

³⁷⁵ SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 3, p. 40b; *chib-kuan* 48, p. 100b.

³⁷⁶ *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (2000) *chia* 12, p. 251; also SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 48, pp. 101b–102b.

³⁷⁷ SHY (1966) *chib-kuan* 3, pp. 42b–43a, includes statistics on the reductions and the agencies involved.

in the central offices had fallen 28 percent below the quotas of 1131.³⁷⁸ A contemporary memorial blamed Ch'in Kuei for the excess: "He violated the statutes because he disliked having graded officials close to him, and he preferred clerks, whom he rewarded beyond all normal standards."³⁷⁹ This reduction in clerical staffing reflects Hsiao-tsung's desire to restore elements of the traditional Northern Sung model of government. His rejuvenation of the outer court audience protocols in the 1160s, mentioned above, also reflects this trend. The vitality and status of these rituals in the Southern Sung coordinate closely with the rise and fall of sole councilors. Largely moribund under Kao-tsung and Ch'in Kuei, they returned in the 1160s and 1170s, only to fade once again under Han T'o-chou and Shih Mi-yüan.³⁸⁰ Ritual gatherings of diffident officials benefited neither the emperor nor the sole councilor. As Hung Mai implies, there were, anyway, few officials to attend. And for an emperor and a councilor who were in accord, the open-court memorial process was little more than a distraction.

Southern Sung texts, as early as 1132, often repeat the phrase "the clerks are strong, the officials are weak." The formulation implies an official helplessness, as clerks dominated routine government and used their superior knowledge of statutes and bureaucratic procedure to connive against their reputed masters.³⁸¹ Yeh Shih claimed that the graded officials themselves were to blame. They never deigned to master the technicalities in the very statutes they themselves had allowed to proliferate.³⁸² Handbooks for Southern Sung officials warn that clerks do not respect "public opinion." The official must be vigilant and never delegate authority to them, for the people make no distinctions between who is a clerk and who is an official.³⁸³ In 1141, as the Jurchen delegation approached the capital to sign the peace accords, many officials refused to attend the formal reception ceremony. To solve this dilemma, Ch'in Kuei dressed his clerks in official robes, and they stood at audience in place of the graded officials. The image was prophetic.

Along with the growth of clerical power came the increasing consolidation of separate statutory authorities into the hands of the chief councilors. The Sung founders had insisted upon strict division between the civil authority of the Secretariat-Chancellery and the military authority of the Military Affairs Commission. A separate Finance Commission and eunuch control of imperial

³⁷⁸ Umehara, *Sōdai kanryō seido kenkyū*, p. 533.

³⁷⁹ SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 3, p. 44b. ³⁸⁰ For this decline, see SS (1977) 116, p. 2759.

³⁸¹ For examples, see Yao-lu (1988) 60, p. 1034-5; 142, pp. 2286-7; SHY (1966) *chih-kuan* 60, p. 39a-b; Liu, "The Sung views on the control of government clerks," pp. 336-7.

³⁸² Yeh, *Yeh Chih chi*, pp. 804-5, 808-9; Liu, "The Sung views on the control of government clerks," pp. 337-8; Winston Wan Lo, *The life and thought of Yeh Shih* (Gainsville, 1974), p. 134.

³⁸³ Anonymous, *Chou-hsien t'i-kang* (c.1158; TSCC ed.) 1, p. 3.

finance also excluded chief councilors from access to detailed information on revenue and budgets. Gradually, and in the face of continual opposition from the monarchy, the councilors eroded both dividers. The late Northern Sung is again the key period. The Yüan-feng reforms disbanded the Finance Commission and placed its subunits under the jurisdiction of the chief councilors in the Department of State Affairs.³⁸⁴ In 1122, Wang Fu's Frontier Defense Office eroded the boundaries between the chief councilors and the Military Affairs Commissioner. By the reign of Hsiao-tsung, chief councilors routinely carried concurrent appointment as Military Affairs Commissioner.³⁸⁵ This combined authority, plus another concurrent appointment as Commissioner of State Revenue (*Kuo-yung shih*), enabled Han T'o-chou to collect taxes directly from the provinces and pursue his disastrous war against the Jurchen in 1206.³⁸⁶

These consolidations of power paved the way for the longest-ruling sole councilor in Sung history, Shih Mi-yüan, who held the office from 1209 through his death in 1233.³⁸⁷ The authors of the *Sung history* declined to label Shih a "nefarious minister," largely because the *Tao-hsiieh* teachings had spread widely during his administration and were declared state orthodoxy in 1241 under the sole administration of his nephew, Shih Sung-chih (d. 1256). Yet his contemporary critics were not so kind. Wei Liao-weng (1178–1237), a leading *Tao-hsiieh* scholar of the period, submitted a lengthy memorial on how Emperor Li-tsung should seize the opportunity presented by Shih's death to reform his government. Wei's text contained ten points. First, eliminate the Secretariat examiners (*Chung-shu chien-cheng*) and restore the integrity of the three departments so that "the Secretariat obtains the imperial will, the Chancellery resubmits the memorial, the Department of State Affairs promulgates the action." Second, end concurrent appointments between the chief councilor and the Military Affairs Commissioner, thus restoring the latter's independent authority. Third, discontinue the practice of allowing the chief councilors to work at home and re-establish the Hall of Administration as a center for the conduct of official business. Fourth, restore permission for ministers-in-attendance to present memorials. Fifth, revitalize the Classics Mat lectures. Sixth, separate the Censorate and the Bureau of Policy Criticism and remove both from the influence of the chief councilor. Seventh, restore the integrity of the Institute of Academicians and the ability of Secretariat drafters to "return for correction" court documents and appointments. Eighth, restore the ability

³⁸⁴ Hartwell, "The imperial treasuries," pp. 65–72.

³⁸⁵ For an excellent twelfth-century account of the relationship between the two agencies, see Wang Ming-ch'ing, *Hui-chu lu* (1194; Peking, 1964) *hou-chi*, 1, pp. 65–8.

³⁸⁶ *Ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi*, Part 2, 13, p. 725.

³⁸⁷ For a sympathetic account of Shih Mi-yüan, see Davis, *Court and family in Sung China*, pp. 79–117.

of “speakers” to submit memorials at audience in open court. The last two concern military issues and are not relevant to this discussion.³⁸⁸

A recent commentary on this memorial rightly concludes, “Wei’s proposals were no hot air: they went to the heart of the problems of imperial and bureaucratic power in Sung.”³⁸⁹ Wei forcefully advocated that the Northern Sung model of government should be restored. His proposals spoke to every major issue in the eleventh-century search for a government of balanced functional units. Somewhat ahistorically, he saw the Yüan-feng reforms as a bulwark against authoritarian control. He inherited this view from twelfth-century political thinkers who looked to strict separation of the three departments, strong exercise of “return-for-correction” authority, and wide avenues for “public opinion” as safeguards against abuse of documentary protocol by monarch or chief councilor.³⁹⁰ As I have argued above, the perceived integration of these features into a smoothly working government was largely a historical chimera. However, Wei’s proposals – if his descriptions of contemporary court practice are accurate – reveal how extensively the sole councilor Shih Mi-yüan had subverted all the major institutions of Sung government. In the end, it was the chief councilors and their coalitions of “clerks and petty men” that won the struggle for power in Sung. Reforms that had begun in the Northern Sung when gentlemen-scholars set out to rid the clerks of petty corruption ended when the clerks and petty men completed the corruption of the gentlemen-scholars.

³⁸⁸ Wei, *Ho-shan chi*, 18, pp. 1a–24a. See also the brief synopsis in James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien), “Wei Liao-weng’s thwarted statecraft,” in *Ordering the world: Approaches to state and society in Sung dynasty China*, ed. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 336–48, esp. 344–6. For another contemporary tract that covers similar ground, see the “Memorial discussing six ways in which today does not measure up to the times of Emperor Hsiao-tsung”, Wu, *Ho-lin chi* 19, pp. 4a–8a.

³⁸⁹ Conrad Schirokauer and Robert P. Hymes, “Introduction,” in *Ordering the world: Approaches to state and society in Sung dynasty China*, ed. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), p. 30.

³⁹⁰ See Ch’en, *Ch’en Liang chi* 2, pp. 21–30, for an argument against the imperial overuse of “directed edicts.” For analysis of this text, see Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism: Ch’en Liang’s challenge to Chu Hsi* (Cambridge, MA, 1982), pp. 77–8. See also Tseng, *Tu-hsing tsa-chih* 8, pp. 60–1, for the same argument applied to Ts’ai Ching. These texts date from 1169 and 1175 respectively.

CHAPTER 2

THE SUNG FISCAL ADMINISTRATION

Peter J. Golas

INTRODUCTION

In order to carry out normal administration as well as to deploy economic resources for purposes such as defending the dynasty and its territories, maintaining the forms of ritual correctness (including regular and often expensive sacrifices), and providing relief to the populace in bad times, the Sung government (960–1279) had to devise and implement financial policies. To do so required reasonably accurate information on which the policies could be based. Once policies were implemented, a continuing feedback of information was necessary to assess whether they were accomplishing their objectives and to suggest modifications to meet changing circumstances. Finally, there had to be checks on those who implemented the policies in order to prevent or at least minimize their misuse for private gain.

Making government administration, including the fiscal administration, work in the Sung was complicated by the rapid growth and change that characterized the period. From an administrative perspective, the key development was the increase in the size of the empire, not in overall territory but in the increasing amounts of territory that supported dense populations.¹ Of comparable importance for deriving necessary government revenues was the growth in size and complexity of the Sung economy. Not only was agricultural production on the rise but nonagricultural production as well as marketing and trade were assuming an importance in the economy far beyond anything previously seen in China.

The efforts of the Sung government to extract from this new economy the ever-greater revenues it needed not only to provide regular government services for the growing population but also to meet the military costs which always represented the lion's share of government expenditures led to a fiscal administration that surpassed in sophistication and effectiveness anything

¹ Robert M. Hartwell, "Demographic, political, and social transformations of China, 750–1550," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42 No. 2 (December 1982), pp. 365–442, 395–6 and 400.

previously seen in China.² That effectiveness was greatly aided by three important developments.

The first, surprisingly, was a significant diminution in the ability of the central government directly to influence the management of routine fiscal operations throughout the empire. Increasingly, as we shall discuss below, such management devolved on the regional administrations or circuits (*lu*). The degree to which the government lost effective control over the details of the fiscal administration is nicely illustrated in the area of collection and compilation of financial data. All the preachments about “determining expenditures by calculating income” (*liang ru wei chu*) cannot disguise the fact that *no one* in the central government from the emperor on down had in most years more than a very vague idea of just how much the government took in or disbursed. Only eleven times in the 319 years of the dynasty was the government able to complete a *k'uai-chi lu* (accounting register) or general account of finances and population which sought to provide that information.³ Even in these cases, it is questionable how far the results were worth the considerable effort (several officials might have to be assigned to this task for more than a year). Total income figures, for instance, were regularly given in units

² The only full history of the Sung fiscal administration in any language is Wang Sheng-to, *Liang Sung ts'ai-cheng shi*, 2 vols. (Peking, 1995). There is also, however, a great deal on fiscal administration in Ch'i Hsia's massive history of the Sung economy: Ch'i Hsia, *Sung-tai ching-chi shih*, 2 vols. (Shanghai, 1987–8). Both works have thoroughly mined the primary sources and provide admirably profuse references (including page numbers); they are thus excellent guides to the primary materials having to do with the fiscal administration. The standard overall reference in Japanese has long been Sogabe Shizuo, *Sōdai zaiseishi* (Tōkyō, 1941), but it is much less complete than the Chinese works. In recent decades, however, it has been the work of Robert M. Hartwell that has most influenced how scholars at least in the West understand the Sung fiscal administration. His powerful analysis of a vast amount of data culled from Sung sources together with a groundbreaking interpretation of political and social changes in China from the T'ang to the Ming has led to a much deeper understanding not only of how the fiscal administration operated but also of how it fit into the larger developments that characterized China's early modern period. Most of his interpretations can be found in Robert M. Hartwell, “Demographic, political, and social transformations of China,” especially pp. 394–405, and in Robert M. Hartwell, “Government finance and the regional economies of China, 750–1250,” Conference on Spatial and Temporal Trends and Cycles in Chinese Economic History, 980–1980 (August 1984); Robert M. Hartwell, “Financial expertise, examinations, and the formation of economic policy in Northern Sung China,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 30 No. 2 (February 1971), pp. 281–314; and Robert M. Hartwell, “The imperial treasuries: Finance and power in Song China,” *Bulletin of Sung-Yüan Studies* 20 (1998), pp. 18–89. Two extremely valuable volumes for definitions of technical terms (which are usually not well covered in dictionaries) are Hoshi Ayao, *Chūgoku shakai keizaishi goi* (Tōkyō, 1966); and Hoshi Ayao, *Chūgoku shakai keizaishi goi (Zokuben)* (Tōkyō, 1975); because the author fastidiously gives references to the secondary sources from which he has drawn his definitions, these volumes can serve as handy glossaries/indexes to most of the best Japanese scholarship that had been produced up to the time they were published.

³ On accounting in the Sung, see Philip Yuen-ko Fu (Fu Yüan-kuo), “A study of governmental accounting in China: With special reference to the Sung dynasty” (diss., University of Illinois, 1968), pp. 175–384; and Philip Yuen-ko Fu (Fu Yüan-kuo), “*K'uai-chi lu* and other special reports in the Sung dynasty,” *Chung chi hsiieh-pao* 8 No. 2 (1969), pp. 78–90.

of revenue that might include a combination of strings of cash, *shih* of grain, ounces of silver, rolls of cloth, and bundles of grass. Total figures of this sort were in their nature only approximate. A notable example is the often-cited maximum Northern Sung (960–1127) revenue figure: 150 million units for the year 1021. This figure is grossly inflated by the inclusion of more than 60 million units of grass and plants, firewood and charcoal.

Yet at the same time that the court and central government were losing direct control over the daily functioning of the fiscal administration, the ability of government officials to intervene even to the lowest levels of society and the economy was growing. In part, this came about because population growth and settlement led to an increase in the number of counties (*hsien*), the lowest general administrative level of the government, as well as a general devolution of functions from the prefectures (*chou*, *fu*) to the counties (if, that is, Hartwell is correct).⁴ Moreover, as we shall see below, it was not uncommon in the Northern Sung for officials even to be dispatched into the countryside to oversee the operations of a mining or smelting installation, or perhaps a wineshop that was part of the state monopoly.⁵

The third development that underlay the effectiveness of the fiscal administration was the emergence within the Northern Sung government bureaucracy of a "professional financial service," which "...had its own standards of competence and body of theoretical doctrine, which were accepted, learned, and used by the career expert."⁶ The knowledge accumulated by this core of officials specializing in financial matters led to the formulation of policies based on their experience of what had worked in the past, while the opportunity they had to spend much of their career in financial posts gave them the expertise to implement policies effectively. This led to a consistency in fiscal administration that, among other things, encouraged the sustained economic development that marked this period.

The result was a fiscal administration that, with all its limitations, succeeded remarkably well in providing the revenue needed not only for the

⁴ Hartwell, "Demographic, political, and social transformations of China," pp. 395–6.

⁵ Peter J. Golas, "The Sung wine monopoly" (diss., Harvard University, 1972), pp. 15–16, 18, 24–6; Peter J. Golas, "The mining policies of the Sung government," in *Ryū Shiken bakase shōju kinen Sōshi kenkyū ronshū*, ed. Kinugawa Tsuyoshi (Kyōto, 1989), pp. 411–28, 413.

⁶ Hartwell, "Financial expertise," p. 309. Marianne Bastid points out that, in the Ming (1368–1644) and Ch'ing (1616–1912), the people and offices handling fiscal matters cannot be considered "a financial administration in the true sense of the term" because they did not constitute a "specialized administration [with its own budget] responsible for the overall management of public finance from the central to the local levels." Marianne Bastid, "The structure of the financial institutions of the state in the late Qing," in *The scope of state power in China*, ed. Stuart R. Schram (London, Hong Kong, and New York, 1985), pp. 51–79, 53. The same qualification can be made for Hartwell's "professional financial service" of the Sung.

ordinary running of the government but also for defense needs that throughout the dynasty represented the lion's share of government expenditures. Various estimates based on the admittedly inadequate data available are nevertheless in agreement that the Sung government was able to collect in taxes and other payments a much greater percentage of total national income than the Ming or the Ch'ing dynasties, and probably more than any other premodern government anywhere.⁷

In the following pages, we shall first outline in general terms developments in fiscal administration over the course of the Sung period and then consider in somewhat more detail the major policies, their implementation, and their successes and failures.

Putting together a financial administration

Discussions of the early Sung regularly stress the threat the new dynasty faced from certain military commanders whose power brought them considerable independence and whose ambitions might include the throne. This conventional view contains more than a kernel of truth. Without a means to break the pattern of usurpation backed by military force, what we now know as the "Five Dynasties" (907–60) might well have stretched into the six, seven or more dynasties. Yet framing the problem this way curiously understates it. While Chao K'uang-yin (T'ai-tsu, 927–76, r. 960–76), the Sung founder, and Chao P'u, (922–92) his all-important adviser, had to neutralize quickly and effectively the potentially most dangerous generals, their actions were guided by a larger vision: the complete reversal of the militarization that had infected the political order and society itself since the latter part of the T'ang (618–907). We have Chao's own words expressing his fierce determination in this area: "I am sending more than a hundred scholarly officials with administrative skill to take over the various regional government offices. Even if all of them should turn out to be corrupt, their corruption would hardly be as bad as that of a single corrupt military man."⁸ It was their success in this task, requiring not months or years but generations, that not only secured the position of the Sung emperors but also sent Chinese society off in a new direction.

⁷ In other words, probably between 10 and 15 percent of GDP. Peter J. Golas, "The Sung economy: How big?" *Bulletin of Sung-Yüan Studies* 20 (1988), pp. 90–4; Hartwell, "Government finance," p. 3 ("between nine and seventeen percent"), 21 ("By 1077, . . . less than twelve percent of GNP").

⁸ Li T'ao, *Tzu-chib t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien* (1183; Peking, 1979–95) (hereafter *HCP* (1979)) 13, p. 293; P'eng Pai-ch'uan, *T'ai-ping chib-chi t'ung-lei*, 3 vols. (c. 13th century; Taipei, 1966) 2, p. 13a; Liu Tzu-chien (James T. C. Liu), "Sung roots of Chinese conservatism: The administrative problems," *Journal of Asian Studies* 26 No. 3 (May 1967), p. 461.

Efforts to demilitarize the administrative apparatus inherited from the preceding dynasties focused first on the post of military commissioner (*chieh-tu shih*).⁹ It was this post, with its control over both the military and the finances of a given area, that had enabled generals to challenge the throne. Chao K'uang-yin, former military governor, now Emperor T'ai-tsu, knew the danger only too well. In the first years of his reign, he succeeded in separating the most powerful military governors from their personal armies, either by transferring them or, in the case of his strongest supporters, by persuading them to relinquish real power for generous sinecures. The immediate threat disposed of, T'ai-tsu and his successors then proceeded gradually to pare off actual functions from the post of military governor until it eventually became only a titular office (*chieh-kuan*), important for determining an official's status and salary but devoid of real power. So successful was this policy that, for more than one hundred years, the danger of locally based military power disappeared.¹⁰

Although control by the military governors over large areas consisting of many prefectures had made possible their independent power, there was never any attempt in the Sung to fix the individual prefecture as the highest level of local administration. As we saw in the Introduction, the empire had simply grown too large (in terms of population) and complex to allow for direct supervision of local fiscal activities by the central government. Hence the entire empire was divided into circuits (*lu* or, for a short time, *tao*) which usually included eight to fifteen prefectures. These circuits served in the first instance for the surveillance of affairs in the prefectures but increasingly tended to assume other roles such as general co-ordination and mobilization of a region's resources.¹¹ The utility of a co-ordinating administrative unit of about this size between the prefectures and the central government is apparent in the evolution of a number of these circuits, often with similar boundaries, into the provinces of the Ming and Ch'ing periods.¹²

⁹ Winston Wan Lo (Lo Wen), "Circuits and circuit intendants in the territorial administration of Sung China," *Monumenta Serica* 31 (1974-5), pp. 39-107; and Miyazaki Ichisada, "Sōdai shūken seido no yurai to sono tokushoku: Tokoku ni gazen no hensen ni tsuite," *Shirin* 36 No. 2 (1953), pp. 1-27, collected in Miyazaki Ichisada, *Ajiasbi kenkyū*, 4 vols. (Kyōto, 1957-64), Volume 4, pp. 53-86.

¹⁰ See the treatment of this process by Lau Nap-yin and Huang Kuan-chung, "Founding and consolidation of the Sung dynasty under T'ai-tsu (960-976), T'ai-tsung (976-997), and Chen-tsung (997-1022)," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 5, Part 1: *The Sung dynasty and its precursors*, 907-1279, ed., Denis C. Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 217-20.

¹¹ Lo, "Circuits and circuit intendants," pp. 63, 64, 67 ff. In typical checks-and-balances fashion, the Sung central government also encouraged a degree of rivalry between commissioners in order to bolster its own ultimate control.

¹² Winston Wan Lo (Lo Wen), *An introduction to the civil service of Sung China: With emphasis on its personnel administration* (Honolulu, 1987), pp. 41-2; Hartwell, "Demographic, political, and social transformations," p. 397-8. Kracke viewed the circuit commissioners as essentially "a rectification apparatus similar to that of the Censorate (*yü-shih t'ai*) in the central government." Edward A. Kracke Jr.,

The circuits defined the area of activity of a number of circuit commissioners whose offices were designated as supervisorates or surveillance agencies (*chien-ssu*). During the first century of the dynasty, the three most important were the fiscal commissioners (*chuan-yün shih*, also referred to as *ts'ao-ssu*), the judicial commissioners (*t'i-tien hsing-yü kung-shih* or *hsien-ssu*) and the military commissioners (*ching-lüeh an-fu shih* or *shuai-ssu*). They were aided by vice commissioners (*fu-shih*) and administrative assistants (*p'an-kuan*).¹³ The circuit of one kind of commissioner was not always coterminous with that of another. In an extreme example, from the 1080s, the Shan-hsi region (*Shan-hsi lu*) was divided into two fiscal circuits (*Ch'in-feng lu* and *Yung-hsing-chün lu*) but six military circuits (*Ch'in-feng lu*, *Ching-yüan lu*, *Fu-yen lu*, *Hsi-bo lu*, *Huan-ch'ing lu*, and *Yung-hsing-chün lu*).

Fiscal and other commissioners were originally viewed as supervisory officials to oversee the administration of prefectures and counties. Although Sung prefects had the right to memorialize the emperor directly, it was primarily on the reports from fiscal commissioners that the government relied both for economic policy proposals and for general economic information. The role of the fiscal commissioners was not long limited to supervising and advising, however. It broadened rapidly to include actual administrative functions. The wine monopoly provides an illustration. Since smooth and effective functioning of the government wineries was one of their responsibilities, the fiscal commissioners checked the receipts from all wineries, ordered their immediate subordinates or officials from the prefectural offices to inspect specific wineries, determined which wineries would be directly run by the officials and which would be leased out to private operators, worked together with prefects and magistrates in arranging the leasing, decided yearly quotas of revenue that the wineries were required to produce, and impeached winery officials for corruption. Ultimately, the fiscal commissioners came to be responsible for all financial matters within their circuits, making the post of fiscal commissioner ordinarily the most important office in Sung local government.¹⁴

Civil service in early Sung China, 960–1067: With particular emphasis on the development of controlled sponsorship to foster administrative responsibility (Cambridge, MA, 1953), p. 51. This certainly is true for the early Sung, but the scope of their activities tended to grow over time. Nevertheless, the Sung circuits differed from the later provinces in generally being smaller, in having a much more limited role in actual administration, and in not having a single official in charge of and responsible for all the circuit's activities. Moreover, while Sung prefects could communicate directly with the central government, in the Ming and Ch'ing all such communications had to be routed through the provincial government offices.

¹³ The informal names for their respective commissions were *Ts'ao-ssu* (Fiscal), *Hsien-ssu* (Judicial), and *Shuai-ssu* (Military).

¹⁴ In practice, the fiscal commissioners directed most of their efforts toward the commercial side of the economy, which was more susceptible than agriculture to rational management and offered greater possibilities for raising extra revenue when necessary. Lo, "Circuits and circuit intendents," p. 68.

The judicial and military commissioners also had certain responsibilities in local financial administration. Judicial commissioners, for example, often supervised the price-regulating granaries ("ever normal granaries," *ch'ang-p'ing ts'ang*), mainly because these funds and grains, stored against natural disasters, proved very susceptible to raiding for other purposes when left under the control of the fiscal commissioners and regular financial officials in the prefectures. Military commissioners were often ordered to check into the need for government relief in specific regions. This role dated at least from the T'ang, perhaps because natural calamities could easily become the spark that ignited local disorders and uprisings. Finally, in the prosperous southeast, a fourth kind of commissioner, the supply commissioners (*fa-yün shih*), were appointed to handle a number of functions related to the transport and storage of grain, including its transshipment up the Pien Canal to K'ai-feng, as well as government monopolies.

In the central government, most economic matters were handled by the State Finance Commission or the Three Offices (*San-ssu*).¹⁵ The "three offices" referred to were the three branches of the commission, each handling a separate group of functions. The Salt and Iron Monopoly Bureau (*Yen-t'ieh ssu*), highest in prestige, handled the production and distribution of military supplies, paid the salaries of military officials, supervised communications, collected commercial taxes, and ran the government monopolies, except for the wine monopoly. The Tax Bureau (*Tu-chih ssu*) prepared annual financial reports and controlled receipts and disbursements, including the salaries of civil officials. The Census Bureau (*Hu-pu ssu*) was responsible for population records, collected agricultural taxes, administered the wine monopoly, supervised long-term storage of goods, and handled certain public-works projects.

This division of functions owed a great deal to historical accident. For example, the precedent of assigning the wine monopoly to the Census Bureau dated from the T'ang, probably because of the frequent practice at that time of collecting a wine excise tax along with the biannual tax (*liang-shui*), also handled by the Census Bureau. Although excise taxes were of almost no importance in Northern Sung wine revenues, the T'ang precedent of handling wine receipts and the twice-yearly tax in the same office persisted. Many problems of the Sung financial administration stemmed from similar inefficient divisions of responsibility. But, as in any government, rationalization was hard to achieve given the stakes the various offices had in maintaining their powers.

Providing effective direction for the unwieldy financial bureaucracy – the Finance Commission's offices alone employed over 1,000 clerks as early

¹⁵ For convenience and consistency, we shall hereafter refer to this office simply as the "Finance Commission."

as 978 – was a major headache for the government in the early decades of the dynasty. Various unsuccessful attempts were made to divide authority at the top among two or more commissioners, but it was not until the beginning of the eleventh century that a workable answer was found: a single finance commissioner (*san-ssu shih*), aided by an assistant commissioner (*san-ssu fu-shih*) and three administrative assistants (*san-ssu p'an-kuan*) in each of the three offices. The finance commissioners were answerable not to the chief councilors (*tsai-hsiang*) who headed the regular civil administration, but directly to the emperor. In theory, this gave considerable control over finances to the emperor.¹⁶ In practice, the situation was often quite different, as when the post of finance commissioner was held concurrently by a chief councilor.¹⁷

Military influence in the Finance Commission was phased out only gradually. Both T'ai-tsu and T'ai-tsung (r. 976–97) often appointed trusted military officers to serve as finance commissioners. Nevertheless, even at an early date, the trend was to take key functions away from the generals; in 973, for example, civil officials took over the Bursary (*Liang-liao yüan*), which stocked grains and hay for the support of the armies.¹⁸ From the reign of Chentung (r. 997–1022), appointment of military officers as finance commissioners occurred less frequently. This downgrading of the military role in the financial administration was an essential part of the Sung effort to restore firm civil control over the government, but its by-product was the often poor co-ordination between military policy and financial support for it.

Just as the fiscal commissioners shared with other commissioners some of the control over financial affairs in their circuits, other offices in the central government that were more or less independent of the Finance Commission handled certain financial functions. The Court of the Imperial Treasury (*T'ai-fu ssu*), for instance, had lost to the Finance Commission control over the storage of taxes and the payment of civil officials' salaries but still handled part of the large outlays for the imperial sacrifices and was responsible for standardizing weights and measures. In the first century of the Sung, such offices were overshadowed by the power of the Finance Commission. It was not until the reorganizations of the 1070s and 1080s that many of them would regain or surpass their pre-Sung importance. Especially the Court of Agricultural Supervision (*Ssu-nung ssu*), with its responsibility for the price-regulating and other public-relief granaries, was to occupy a leading position in the implementation of the reform program of Wang An-shih (1021–86).

¹⁶ Dagmar Schäfer, "Die Legitimation der Beamten in der Song-Dynastie," in *Beamtentum und Wirtschaftspolitik in der Song Dynastie*, ed. Dieter Kuhn and Ina Asim (Heidelberg, 1995), pp. 78–172, esp. 138–9.

¹⁷ Charles O. Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles in imperial China* (Stanford, 1985), pp. 42 and 401–2, #4912.

¹⁸ Hucker, *Dictionary of official titles*, p. 310, #3670.

At the prefectural level, many financial activities were handled not by the prefect but by the vice prefect (*t'ung-pan*). The post of vice prefect was a Sung invention, first implemented in 963 as a check especially on military prefects whose total loyalty to the government was questionable. (Vice prefects were sometimes called *chien-chou* or "prefectural supervisor.") Vice prefects enjoyed approximate equality with prefects: they were permitted to memorialize the throne directly on prefectural affairs and their endorsement (*chien-shu*) was required on reports from the prefect. With the progress in demilitarizing the local administration, the original function of the vice prefects declined in importance. In its place, they came to specialize increasingly in financial matters, acquiring an expertise that reinforced their independence vis-à-vis the prefects. Much the same kind of independence was enjoyed at the county level by vice magistrates (*hsien-ch'eng*), who were appointed in counties of special importance. How best to balance the roles of prefect and associate prefect as well as magistrate and vice magistrate occasioned a great deal of discussion throughout the Sung. Especially in the Southern Sung, it was often argued that the independence of the vice magistrates hampered smooth administration.

Rising revenues, rising expenditures, c. 1000–1068

T'ai-tsu and T'ai-tsung bequeathed to their successors a prosperous empire in which taxes were light and the government treasuries full. In addition to a workable financial bureaucracy, they had also created a unified, stable currency out of the various monetary systems of the Five Dynasties period. Fully aware of the north's dependence on grain and revenue from the southeast, they had taken a personal interest in the development of the water transport system centered on the Pien Canal. By the turn of the century, the flow of government rice from the southeast was approaching the level it would maintain throughout the eleventh century.

With the accession to the throne of Chen-tsung, the first Sung emperor born and raised in the palace, a new period began. Very quickly, the austerity of the earlier emperors went out of fashion. Chen-tsung not only could draw on great accumulated wealth, but also had an important purpose to which it could be devoted: refurbishing imperial prestige, somewhat tarnished after the treaty of Shan-yüan (1005) in which the Chinese bought peace with the Liao (907–1125) by humbling themselves and agreeing to pay an annual gift (*sui-pi*) of silver and silk. In place of military glory, for which he seems in any case to have been ill-suited, Chen-tsung turned to pageantry, displaying the imperial majesty in a series of elaborate sacrifices to Heaven and Earth. Fittingly, he owns the distinction of being the last emperor in Chinese history

to celebrate his accession with costly *feng-shan* sacrifices which were supposed to date back to the Chou (1046–256 BC).¹⁹

Sung revenues, managed at this time by a series of capable financial officials, were large enough to support with relative ease the free-spending emperor. More of a problem were the costs of a growing professional army. Peace alone was not enough to reduce military expenditures. Where the number of imperial troops (*ch'in-chün*) had been 193,000 around 970 and something over 350,000 at the turn of the century, it rose to 432,000 around 1020. In the late 1030s and early 1040s, war with Hsi Hsia (1032–1227) in the northwest and uneasy relations with the Liao almost doubled this figure, to 826,000. The enormous problems of supplying and paying for armies of this size forced some reductions over the next two decades but, in the mid-1060s, the total still stood at 663,000.²⁰

The government thus found it more and more necessary to increase its revenues. In practice, this usually meant efforts to draw greater receipts from nonagricultural sources of taxation such as its monopolies and the commercial tax. The result was one of the most striking developments of the Sung period: for the only time in pre-nineteenth-century Chinese history, revenue from nonagricultural sources equaled and even surpassed agricultural revenues in the central government's budget.

This development reflects, of course, a burgeoning nonagricultural sector of the economy that offered unprecedented resources available to be tapped by the government. But because much of the trade was in rural areas, government authority had to penetrate the countryside far more effectively than it had previously if the potential revenues were to be realized. This need was met by establishing, under the control of the counties, a large number of *ch'ang-wu*, monopoly or commercial tax installations, directed not by clerks or local notables but by regular officials, the state monopoly agents (*chien-tang kuan*). In the eleventh century, the empire came to be blanketed by over five

¹⁹ In fact, they seem to have begun with the first emperor of the Ch'in (r. 221–210 BC). They had also been performed by Han Wu-ti (r. 141–87 BC) and more recently by T'ang Kao-tsung (r. 649–83), Empress Wu (r. 684–705), and Hsüan-tsung (r. 712–56). Chen-tsung at least chose lofty models. Unfortunately, in the spending of vast sums of money on sacrifices, he himself became something of a model. In many years of the eleventh century, expenditure for imperial sacrifices amounted to several times the total amount of official salaries. Hino Kaisaburô, "Zei, zaisei," in *Sekai rekishi taikêi* (Tôkyô, 1934), pp. 245–63, 256.

²⁰ These figures do not include the militarily unimportant provincial armies (*hsiang-chün*), made up in large part of convicts and used for various local government tasks such as public works, manning the courier-transport system and the like. They were mainly a drain on prefectural and county finances. Their number, too, was increasing, from 185,000 around 970, to 480,000 around 1020, to 499,000 in the mid-1060s. For the Sung military and its provisioning, see the works referred to in Paul Jakob Smith, *Taxing heaven's storehouse: Horses, bureaucrats, and the destruction of the Sichuan tea industry*, 1074–1224 (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 342–3 n. 3. See also the chapter by Wang Tseng-yü in this volume.

thousand *ch'ang-wu*. How they functioned varied considerably, depending on local conditions. A given *ch'ang-wu* might handle only a winery or only commercial taxes, though the more common practice seems to have been to combine two or more functions in a single installation. Nevertheless, the principle was always control by regular officials, even if this was a concurrent duty held by an official whose main duties were at the county seat. Direct government control in the Northern Sung did not stop at the county level; rather, it was the government's ability to operate directly and effectively even in small towns and villages that helped make possible soaring receipts from the commercial taxes and the monopolies.

The *ch'ang-wu* were not without their problems. One of the main impediments to their effective functioning was the attitude of more conservative officials who felt that this kind of post involved officials in grubby, undignified competition with the people for profits. The government did not always do all that it might have to discourage these attitudes. Indeed, it as much as upheld the invidious distinction between "officials who cherish people" (*ch'in-min kuan*), i.e. magistrates, and managing officials or "administrators" (*li-wu*) at the *ch'ang-wu* when, in certain cases, it demoted back to a *ch'ang-wu* officials who had had a chance to cherish the people and had turned in a bad performance.

The efforts of the central government to increase its revenues were bound sooner or later to provoke resistance from local officials. Even by the mid-eleventh century, at a time when official discipline and morale were still high, officials at the prefectures were complaining that they could not keep up with the flood of orders on financial matters, many of them contradictory. Even worse were the quotas (*o*) that the government established for various revenues and then raised as its needs increased. Eventually, as the quotas made deep inroads into the revenues available for local administration, officials began to ignore them; in the years following 1058, out of a total commercial tax quota of 22 million strings, only 7 million strings, or less than a third, actually made their way into the central government's coffers. Still, up to this time, the government had been quite successful in gradually increasing its revenues.²¹ Despite all the difficulties of interpreting the revenue totals that appear in Sung sources, it can be said with considerable confidence that the government at least doubled its total receipts in the half-century from the year 1000 to 1050. It was from around this latter date that revenue collections began to

²¹ For a sophisticated analysis of the overall figures for government revenues and expenditures in the Sung, see Wang Sheng-to, "Sung-tai ts'ai-cheng sui-ch'u yü hu-pu yüeh-chih," *Wen shih* 18 (1983), pp. 101-9; reprinted in Chung-kuo Jen-min ta-hsüeh shu-pao tzu-liao she, *Fu-yin pao-k'an tzu-liao* No. 12 (1983), pp. 143-51, especially 151.

decline until, by the mid-1060s, expenditures were exceeding income by as much as 15 million strings yearly. Drastic remedies were called for, and they came in the form of Wang An-shih's reform program.

Reform and its aftermath: 1068–1126

On ascending the throne in 1068, the eighteen-year-old Chao Hsü (1048–85), known to posterity as the emperor Shen-tsung (r. 1067–85), turned his attention immediately to rehabilitating the government's finances. His first step was to establish an Office of Expenditure Reduction (*Ts'ai-chien chü*) to be headed by the already famous and respected Ssu-ma Kuang (1019–86). He must have been keenly disappointed, however, when he read Ssu-ma's general report, a banal rehashing of problems with which everyone in the government was familiar (too many officials and soldiers, imperial extravagance, etc.).²² Instead of recommending specific measures, the report stressed the immensity of the problem and suggested that the emperor discuss at length with his chief advisers ways to ameliorate the situation, whereupon the emperor abolished the Office of Expenditure Reduction.²³

In the second month of the following year, a Finance Planning Commission (*Chih-chih san-ssu t'iao-li ssu*) was formed to study and recommend measures to improve state finances. This office was an organ of the reform group officials. It reported to Wang An-shih; was headed by Lü Hui-ch'ing (1032–1111), one of his close associates; and was filled with supporters of Wang's ideas. No interference with its work was permitted from outside. It began to issue reform laws almost immediately and, before strong opposition forced its absorption a year later into the Secretariat (*Chung-shu sheng*),²⁴ one of the three main central-government agencies that advised the emperor on policy), the commission had got the reform program off to a strong start.

Wang's reforms, a complex set of measures aiming at a variety of goals, resist neat summarization. Even in the case of a single policy, it is sometimes difficult to decide which of its goals were primary; searching for a clear, general

²² In fairness to Ssu-ma, it must be said that it was a well-thought-out and principled position that made it impossible for him to contemplate the kinds of measure that Wang An-shih later advocated and implemented. The best systematic comparison of their views is Peter K. Bol, "Government, society, and state: On the political visions of Ssu-ma Kuang and Wang An-shih," in *Ordering the world: Approaches to state and society in Sung dynasty China*, ed. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 128–92; for a summary of his position written by Ssu-ma just at this time, see p. 156. (The references in Bol's work provide a handy introduction to much of the vast secondary literature on Wang An-shih and his reforms.)

²³ Ssu-ma himself declined to serve on a committee to identify cuts in expenditures; Bol, "Government, society and state," p. 167.

²⁴ Bol, "Government, society and state," p. 168.

conception behind the entire program that would tie it into a tidy package is a futile exercise. Wang took his problems where he found them, devised measures to solve them, and relied on his own very subtle grasp of their interrelationships to give the program coherence.²⁵ There were at least half a dozen major reforms that had as an important component solving problems that the government faced in the area of revenues and fiscal administration, or where it wished to promote economic growth and/or the people's material welfare:

- (1) The Adjustment of Tribute (or Equitable Transport) Policy (*Chün-shu fa*) (1069) gave the fiscal intendants for six southeastern circuits the authority to meet their quotas of goods for court use by purchasing those goods from locations closer to the capital (to cut down on transportation costs) when they were available at advantageous prices.
- (2) The Green Sprouts Policy (*Ch'ing-miao fa*) (1069) drew on the ordinarily idle reserves of the ever-normal granaries to attack the problem of usury in the countryside by providing government loans to farmers.
- (3) The Regulations on Land Reclamation and Water Conservancy (*Nung-t'ien shui-li t'iao-yüeh*) (1069) encouraged the recovering of fallow land as well as irrigation and water-control projects.²⁶
- (4) The Granaries Policy (*Ts'ang fa*) (1070) sought to raise the standards of performance of the clerical sub-bureaucracy by increasing the salaries of those in the central government who were already salaried and by putting previously unsalaried clerks (mainly in local government) on salaries.²⁷
- (5) The Hired Service Policy (*Mu-i fa*) (1071) replaced obligatory local labor service with graduated cash taxes on households to pay for the hiring of men to fill sub-bureaucratic posts in local government.²⁸
- (6) The State Trade Policy (*Shih-i fa*) (1072), by extending credit or buying goods at a fair price, aimed at relieving the exploitation of small and medium (often traveling) merchants by powerful merchants who monopolized trade in a given city. It also consolidated many of the government's commercial ventures.²⁹

²⁵ For Wang, the ultimate coherence of his program derived from the correspondence of the reform policies with the Way of the Sages (*sheng-jen chih tao*) of antiquity. A corollary of this conviction was the belief that the consequences of such correct policies must inevitably be good. Bol, "Government, society and state," p. 143.

²⁶ Teng Ssu-yü, "A fresh look at Wang An-shih's reform movement," in *Ryū Shiken bakase shōju kinen Sōshi kenkyū ronshū*, ed. Kinugawa Tsuyoshi (Kyōto, 1989), pp. 545–66, 548.

²⁷ James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien), *Reform in Sung China: Wang An-shih (1021–1086) and his New Policies* (Cambridge, MA, 1959), pp. 80–5.

²⁸ Liu, *Reform in Sung China*, chapter 6. ²⁹ Hartwell, "Imperial treasuries," pp. 69–70.

- (7) The Land Survey and Equitable Tax Policy (*Fang-t'ien chün-shui fa*) (1072) sought to determine the ownership and quality of land throughout north China so as to assign household rankings and tax quotas fairly.

These reforms will receive more detailed discussion below. For the moment, it is worth noting that the reforms did succeed, at least in the short run, in achieving two of the reform program's major *financial* goals (not necessarily the goals most important to Wang): not only did the government's yearly revenues increase spectacularly, providing far more than was needed to meet expenditures, but the financing of local administration was also put on a sounder basis than at any time since the beginning of the dynasty. Nevertheless, these and other reforms aroused very powerful opposition throughout officialdom. Ideological positions on, for example, the role the government should or should not play in economic affairs undoubtedly played a part. But it is hard to resist the feeling that the very process of implementing the reforms proved to be the major obstacle to their success. Wang, supremely confident that his policies conformed to the principles established by the sages (*sheng-jen*), made a series of mistakes that have frequently bedeviled even the best of policies, in China and elsewhere.³⁰ In the first place, instead of an incremental, gradual implementation of the policies, Wang hit the bureaucracy with a rapid series of major innovations, triggering widespread opposition that also grew with great speed.³¹ Moreover, believing that policies properly grounded in the teachings of the sages must of necessity have good results, Wang was not given to reconsiderations when certain measures did not work out well or produced unintended consequences. Nor was he open to critical advice from below which might have led to a smoother implementation of better-designed policies.³² Despite this, many of the policies did survive in one way or another even into and through the Southern Sung (1127–1279). But a heavy price was paid in the emergence of intense factionalism, recrimination, and demoralization in officialdom³³ that contributed to the fall of the Northern Sung.

It was also during Wang's chief councilorship that preparations were begun for the major reorganization of the bureaucracy that would eventually be

³⁰ These comments owe a great deal to the discussion in James C. Scott, *Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed* (New Haven and London, 1998).

³¹ There were sometimes efforts to test a policy locally before implementing it empire-wide (see e.g. Liu, *Reform in Sung China*, p. 103) but one can be skeptical about how open Wang and his circle were to negative assessments of the experiments.

³² In general, Wang saw differences of opinion as something to be "fully repressed" and feared that criticism of the specifics of a given policy might mask opposition to the basic principles of his program. Bol, "Government, society and state," pp. 145, 170–1.

³³ Liu, *Reform in Sung China*, pp. 59–70.

carried out in the early 1080s.³⁴ This reorganization, often referred to as the Yüan-feng reorganization after the name of the reigning era (1078–85) in which it was enacted, has perhaps not received the study its importance deserves. The stated goal of restoring the early T'ang administrative structure has often encouraged scholars to stress its conservative aspects, an interpretation that seems to mesh well with the unmistakable drift toward conservatism that came to dominate Sung politics not long afterwards. Nevertheless, at least on its financial side, the reorganization seems to have been motivated not by any misty desire to restore the past for its own sake but rather by a very practical determination to trim the power and independence of the Finance Commission and bring finances under the effective control of the chief counselors. Ultimately, this change would be institutionalized in the abolition of the State Finance Commission and the transfer of its functions to the Ministry of Revenue (*Hu-pu*),³⁵ one of the six boards directly under the Department of State Affairs (*Shang-shu sheng*), which in turn was directly controlled by the chief counselors.

Before that, however, a number of preparatory steps had to be taken. In 1072, an Accounts Office (*Chang-ssu*) was established to bring order to the financial records. Headed by Tseng Pu (1035–1107), another close associate of Wang's, and including two hundred clerks, this office was to audit the reports sent in by local officials,³⁶ prepare a yearly report on income and expenditures, and seek ways to simplify accounting documents. In this same period, the functions of the Finance Commission were progressively narrowed. A number of offices whose primary function was not financial were transferred from the commission to more appropriate parent organs: for example, the Armaments Section (*Chou an*) of the Salt and Iron Office (*Yen-t'ieh pu*) was placed under the Directorate for Armaments (*Chün-ch'i chien*) while the Palace Construction Section (*Hsiu-tsao an*), which had handled building projects for the commission, was transferred to the Directorate for the Palace Buildings (*Chiang-tso chien*). Even more indicative of the downgrading of the Finance Commission, Wang

³⁴ This reflected Wang's priorities: he felt that getting financial affairs in order ("managing wealth") should precede reorganization of the bureaucracy. Bol, "Government, society and state," p. 170. He might also have had little choice since he was being pressed by the emperor who wished to improve the country's military strength as rapidly as possible. F. W. Mote, *Imperial China 900–1800* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 140, 143–4.

³⁵ Not to be confused with the Census Bureau (*Hu-pu ssu*) mentioned above, which was one of the three offices of the State Finance Commission; see Hucker, *Dictionary of official titles*, pp. 258–9, #2792.

³⁶ Wang Sheng-to argues that the purpose of these reports, which were mostly submitted only on an annual basis, has often been misinterpreted. Rather than a means by which the central government exercised control over specific expenditures at the local level, the records were used mainly for establishing expenditures for the following year. Wang, "Sung-tai ts'ai-cheng sui-ch'u," p. 146.

chose the Court of the National Granaries (*Ssu-nung ssu*) to be the headquarters of the reform, with control over most of the reform measures.

With the abolition of the Finance Commission, by far the greater part of the economic administration in the central government fell to the two component bureaus of the Ministry of Revenue, the Left Section (*Tso-ts'ao*) and the Right Section (*Yu-ts'ao*). The Left Section had wide-ranging responsibilities for the collection of revenue destined for the central government. It also had jurisdiction over legal cases of certain kinds involving economic matters. In theory, the Minister of Revenue (*Hu-pu shang-shu*) supervised its activities directly, aided by the Left Vice Minister (*Tso-ts'ao shih-lang*). The operations of the Right Section were directed by a Right Vice Minister (*Yu-ts'ao shih-lang*) and consisted mainly in supervising the local officials who controlled revenues destined for local use, e.g. the fees collected for exemption from labor service and the money and grain stored in the price-regulating granaries. Because of the problem of protecting local revenues from diversion for central-government needs, the Right Section was theoretically accorded a certain measure of independence. This fragile independence, however, counted for little when the central government was hard-pressed for revenue.

Three bureaus (*ssu*) rounded out the organization of the Ministry of Revenue. The Tax Bureau (*Tu-chih ssu*) lost some of the functions of the former Tax Bureau but retained its basic responsibility for budget (*nien-chi* or *sui-chi*) planning. The Treasury Bureau (*Chin-pu ssu*), as in the T'ang, had as its main function the storage and disbursement of tax income in money and cloth. It also set and supervised yearly monopoly and commercial tax quotas, followed up delayed payments, and standardized weights and measures. The Granaries Bureau (*Ts'ang-pu ssu*) exercised general supervision over the shipment and storage of grain collected for use by the central government, especially for official salaries and military provisions.

Outside the Ministry of Revenue, the three other major offices with financial functions were the Court of the National Granaries, the Court of the Imperial Treasury and the Bureau of Review (*Pi-pu ssu*) of the Ministry of Justice (*Hsing-pu*). The Court of the National Granaries, after losing to the Right Section control over the reform programs, was concerned mainly with the accounts for government grain. It was abolished completely in the early Southern Sung and its accounting functions passed to the Granaries Bureau but, perhaps because of the independence it made possible for the accountants, it was re-established shortly afterwards. The Court of the Imperial Treasury shared with the Treasury Bureau responsibility for storing non-grain revenues and paying official salaries. It, too, was abolished for a short time at the beginning of the Southern Sung. The Judicial Control Office (*Shen-hsing yüan*) became the government's primary auditing organ, carrying out the audits

of the monthly, quarterly, and annual reports required of all granaries and treasuries.

Shen-tsung, who had directed the reform program and carried out the Yüan-feng reorganization after Wang An-shih's second and final retirement in 1076, died in 1085. Since his successor, Che-tsung (r. 1085-1100), was only eight years old, the dowager empress Hsüan-jen (Dowager Empress Kao, 1028-93) became regent. She called on the leading conservative and opponent of the reforms, Ssu-ma Kuang, to head the government, thus beginning an eight-year assault on the reform program. The Yüan-feng reorganization, on the other hand, largely escaped attack, probably both because of its venerable T'ang forms and because it had been primarily the work of Shen-tsung, not Wang An-shih.

The conservatives, relying on backward-looking and wholly inadequate counterpolicies, had achieved only limited success in their efforts to uproot the reforms when the dowager empress died in 1093. Che-tsung was thus free to begin the formal reimplementations of the reforms. By now, however, the reforms themselves were less important to most officials than the demands of increasingly bitter factional infighting, for which both conservatives and reformers were to blame. During the long reign (1100-25) of the aesthete Hui-tsung, who was unwilling or unable to provide effective leadership, nominal adherence to the reforms did not prevent a steady deterioration of the administration, of which the problems with the Pien Canal (see below) are only one striking example. As the emperor neglected his duties, so too did many of the officials, especially in local government posts. Increasingly, general demoralization and breakdown of discipline among the bureaucrats led inevitably to high taxes, corruption, revolts, and, finally, the inglorious loss of north China to the Chin (1115-1234).

A very altered empire: the Southern Sung

The border between the Sung and the Chin stabilized, even before the peace treaty of 1141, along a line running from the Huai River (*Huai-ho*) in the east to the Ta-san Pass in Shen-hsi. The Southern Sung empire thus contained something less than two-thirds of the territory under Chinese rule during the Northern Sung and something over one-half as many prefectures (170 as compared with over 320). Its population, considerably smaller at first, rose rapidly in the 1130s and 1140s with the influx of migrants from the north. Afterwards, natural increase took over, eventually pushing the population total close to the Northern Sung maximum. Even more significant for the fiscal administration than territory and population, however, was the percentage of Northern Sung revenue sources retained by the contracted empire. We are

fortunate to have late Northern Sung revenue figures broken down by circuit that enable us to calculate this percentage, at least approximately. In 1077, some 52 million units of revenue were recorded in biannual tax payments. By subtracting the figures from those circuits lost in their entirety to the Chin and a part of the figures for Ching-hsi (Ching-hsi lu) and Huai-nan (Huai-nan-hsi lu and Huai-nan-tung lu), parts of which remained under Sung control, it appears that lands retained by the Southern Sung accounted for between 23 million and 25 million units of the 1077 total, or slightly less than half. By contrast, if we take the totals of cash, silver, and silk revenues actually forwarded to K'ai-feng in 1119, the retreat to the south seems to have lost the government only about 2.5 million of some 15 million units of non-grain revenue. In other words, if the picture presented by these figures is accurate, the Southern Sung Empire included the region that had paid, in the late Northern Sung, approximately five-sixths of central-government revenue exclusive of grain. In the case of silver alone, the figure is over 90 percent.³⁷

The relatively high proportion of biannual tax sources lost helps explain why the biannual tax in the Southern Sung made up an even smaller proportion of total government income than in the Northern Sung. Agriculture in the south, though highly productive in many areas, had been and remained rather lightly taxed. The government consciously avoided increasing these taxes; given its inability to halt the trend toward large, undertaxed or untaxed estates, increases would have fallen disproportionately on small and middle farmers.

On the other hand, the very high proportion of non-grain revenues retained by the Southern Sung looms all the larger when compared with the reduction of expenditures that followed automatically on the loss of north China. No longer did grain have to be transported from the southeast to a distant northern capital and an even more distant northern frontier. The Southern Sung capital, Lin-an (Hang-chou), lay in China's economic heartland; both it and the concentrations of soldiers along the border could be fed from the harvests of their surrounding areas; no long shipments of grain were necessary. Even Szechwan (Szechwan lu), the region of the empire most distant from the capital, was not only self-sufficient but had a surplus to contribute to the central government after meeting the costs of the 150,000 to 200,000 troops defending the empire's western gateway. For transport in general, south China, crisscrossed by waterways, was an ideal setting compared to north China, with its large areas not serviced by a navigable river. The Yangtze River (*ch'ang-chiang*) served as an effective east-west axis for the empire

³⁷ Biannual tax receipts and the non-grain revenue figures partially overlap, of course, since some of the biannual tax was paid in cash, cloth, or silver.

without requiring the expensive maintenance that had gone into keeping the Pien Canal open.

The movement in the Southern Sung to a less centralized financial administration, the most significant difference between the fiscal administrations of Northern and Southern Sung China,³⁸ owed a great deal to these geographical conditions. Not only was Szechwan able to take care of itself; it was also too distant to be controlled effectively from Lin-an. As a result, it enjoyed considerable, though by no means complete, independence.³⁹ At many points, financial policy in Szechwan differed sharply from policies followed in the rest of south China. Even areas under relatively more direct central government control were not immune to the general decentralizing trend.⁴⁰ During the 1130s, the government had begun posting to the headquarters of the more powerful border generals high-ranking civil officials bearing the title "general commissioners of supply" (*tsung-ling shih*).⁴¹ Formally charged with supervising revenues sent to the armies, the commissioners surreptitiously kept watch for the central government over all the activities of the generals. To facilitate their activities, they were made formally equal to the generals with whom they served. After the signing of the peace treaty with the Chin in 1141, the court transferred the most powerful generals to the capital and took over direct control of their personal armies. At the same time, it regularized the system of general commissioners of supply. Henceforth, there were to be four commissioners, including one in Szechwan. It was now made clear that they were to report on the activities of the generals defending the border. On the financial side, they were to handle yearly quotas of revenue that would not pass through Lin-an but would be sent to them directly from the prefectures. (Eventually, the three commissioners outside Szechwan were receiving yearly some 30 percent of the regular taxes from the eastern two-thirds of the empire.) The commissioners were also responsible for checking on revenues assigned to them; they were to notify the court which prefectures had met, surpassed, or failed to meet their quotas.

The system of general commissioners of supply has been criticized as a further weakening of the Board of Finance's effective control over the empire's

³⁸ Hartwell, "Imperial treasuries," p. 75. ³⁹ Lo, "Circuits and circuit intendants," pp. 99–103.

⁴⁰ This trend toward decentralization is more apparent to us than it was to many officials in the Southern Sung. For a nicely nuanced discussion why this is the case, see Conrad Schirokauer and Robert P. Hymes, "Introduction," in *Ordering the world: Approaches to state and society in Sung dynasty China*, ed. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 20–1. Winston Wan Lo (Lo Wen), "Fiscal intendants in Southern Sung China: A case study," *Journal of Asian history* 9 No. 2 (1975), pp. 128–54, presents a case study in some detail of the relief efforts of Chen Te-hsiu (1178–1235) when he served as a fiscal commissioner (fiscal intendant) in 1215–16; it helps illuminate just how authority was divided in practice between the central government and local officials.

⁴¹ Hino Kaisaburō, "Sōdai inasaku taikyū tane oyobi fushū hōgaku kō," *Shien* 40 (1949), here pp. 105–6.

tax resources. It is true that the commissioners sometimes abused their position, as when they built up revenue caches of which the central government was unaware. Yet it is difficult to see how Lin-an could have exercised more direct control. Whatever the problems of the Northern Sung transport system, K'ai-feng, at the head of the Pien Canal, had been a logical point for the control and routing of supplies to the armies, either those in its immediate vicinity or those along the northern border. Lin-an, tucked away in one corner of the empire, could hardly perform the same function. Moreover, a tight ship means a disciplined crew, and the dedication of many of the Southern Sung officials to their duties left much to be desired. Poetry and painting, rather than humdrum administration, often were their first concern. This was clearly reflected in the relations between the central government and the local administration. Where the government freely threatened local officials in the Northern Sung with punishments for not observing regulations and meeting quotas, it was often reduced in the Southern Sung to bargaining with them for certain revenues and offering rewards for quotas met. These were hardly conditions making for a centralized, efficient financial administration on the Northern Sung model. At best, the court could try to prevent inevitable decentralization from getting out of hand. From this perspective, the general commissioners of supply, with all their problems, may well have been the best response possible.

AGRICULTURE AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

Rural taxation

The biannual tax

A major development in taxation from the latter half of the T'ang to the Sung was a gradual metamorphosis of the the biannual tax (lit. "two taxes," called also the "regular tax," *cheng-shui*). When originally implemented in 780, this tax had been designed as a single, two-part tax obligation to replace a complex variety of existing levies on the rural and urban populace. This ideal soon disappeared. As cities and towns flourished and increasingly took on an urban character, their residents became the object of other levies more appropriate than the biannual tax. In the countryside, the biannual tax itself shrank in scope, tending to become simply a levy on land under cultivation and only one, if still the most important, of many taxes (labor service, the head tax, miscellaneous taxes) assessed on the rural population.

The two tax payments that made up the biannual tax were the summer tax (*hsia-shui*, also called tax cash, *shui-ch'ien*, or tax silk, *shui-ch'üan*) and the autumn tax (*ch'iu-shui*, also called autumn shoots, *ch'iu-miao*, or autumn

grain, *ch'iu-liang*). The autumn tax, which produced about three-quarters of the annual agrarian tax revenues, was collected sometime between the ninth and second months, according to the area; it was an assessment of a certain amount of grain, or of grain and cash, on the expected production of each *mu* (1.14 acres) cultivated in grain or, in the southeast, specifically in rice. It was usually paid with rice or millet from the preceding summer's crop. The summer tax was a money assessment on the expected production of all cultivated fields, including vegetable gardens and orchards, but it too was often commuted to silk or wheat; it was collected between the fifth and ninth months. Together, the summer and autumn taxes were the chief source of government revenues in kind.

For collection of the biannual tax, cultivated land was divided according to its productive capacity into a number of categories, usually three or four, with varying tax rates.⁴² The general principle was that no more than one-tenth or one-fifteenth of the total harvest should be paid as the biannual tax. Though tax rates varied enormously among villages, among counties, and among prefectures, the information we have suggests that this principle was generally observed, with taxes falling as low as one-twentieth or one-thirtieth of the harvest.⁴³ Even in heavily taxed Chiang-nan-tung circuit (Chiang-nan tung-lu), biannual taxes came to only about one-fifth of the harvest. A further indication of relatively light grain tax payments in the Northern Sung is the fact that the amount of grain collected in taxes tended to remain stable even though the government found it necessary to purchase huge amounts of grain every year, both in the north and in the south. For example, in 1078, thirteen border prefectures in Ho-tung circuit (Ho-tung lu) paid only 392,000 *shih* under the biannual tax while the government purchased in the same prefectures another 824,000 *shih*. Though farmers in north China were subject to higher taxes than their counterparts in the south, their taxes would ordinarily have been light had they been paying only the biannual tax. This was not the case, however.

Supplementary and miscellaneous taxes

From the beginning of the dynasty, the government levied a wide variety of supplementary and miscellaneous taxes and surcharges on the rural population, and their number was constantly increasing.⁴⁴ Many of these taxes began as quite specific payments of one kind or another and only gradually evolved into fixed taxes whose original purpose tended to be forgotten. One

⁴² For sample rates, see Ch'i, *Sung tai ching-chi shi*, Volume 1, p. 396. ⁴³ Hino, "Zei, zaisei," p. 246.

⁴⁴ Ch'i Hsia has counted up more than seventy of these supplementary taxes for the southern Sung: Ch'i, *Sung- tai ching-chi shih*, Volume 1, p. 423.

such charge was a transport fee to cover the cost of shipping tax money and goods.

Ordinarily, the government allowed farmers to pay their taxes, much of them in bulky and difficult-to-transport grain, into granaries or treasuries located in their own district or prefecture. It reserved the right, however, to require that grain be paid wherever else it might be needed. In the Sung, this often meant along the northern/northwestern or the southwestern borders where large numbers of troops were stationed. The government, of course, had to consider costs and difficulties when it assigned transport obligations. If water transport was not available, shipping grain a mere fifty or seventy-five miles could double its cost. Thus, even a government decision changing the payment office from the county yamen to the prefectural yamen fifteen or twenty miles away could mean a heavy burden for poorer taxpayers – and most of the taxpayers were poor. Nor was water transport cheap. Transport costs accounted for roughly half the price charged for rice that came from the southeast to K'ai-feng via the Pien Canal. The government was merely being realistic when it limited the distance taxpayers could be required to transport their tax grain (a maximum of 100 miles or 300 *li* for rich households and thirty-three miles for poor households).

As time went on, the requirement to transport tax grain beyond one's prefecture seems to have become more regular and widespread. In some areas, where the development of markets gave farmers access to an adequate supply of money, officials allowed them to pay the amount of cash that would purchase at the delivery point grain equivalent to their tax obligations. (The assumption in these cases of an availability at the delivery point of sufficient grain for purchase strongly suggests that the government's real intention in extending the shipment distances was often not to get the grain to areas where there was a genuine shortage but merely to save transportation costs.) In 1039, the government generously exempted this cash from further charges by tax stations along the route.

It is not clear how extensively this system of equivalent cash payments was used. Certainly more common was the assessment by the officials of a transport fee (*chih-i*, *chih-i chiao-ch'ien*, *ti-li chiao-ch'ien*) when taxes were paid, after which the government assumed responsibility for transporting the grain. It is this fee that ultimately developed into different kinds of local supplementary tax such as the "three-seven supplement" (*san-ch'i hao*) in Chiang-nan (Chiang-nan-hsi lu and Chiang-nan-tung lu) which amounted to three *shih* and seven *sheng* or 37 percent on each *shih* of tax rice. The more such charges became regular, of course, the more tenuous became their connection with any real transport costs, thus making it easier for either the central government or local officials to up the rate arbitrarily.

Another considerable source of revenue, commutation of grain taxes into cash or other goods (*che-pien*, *che-k'ou*), was theoretically not a tax or surcharge. But commutation in any of its forms was a game at which the government nearly always won, even against its own officials: of the many orders early in the Sung aimed at rectifying the discriminatory pay scale for local officials, the clear majority dealt with commutation abuses that effectively lowered salaries.⁴⁵ Taxpayers, from whom the government could demand payment in whatever form it desired, naturally suffered far more. One of the main attractions of commutation, in the eyes of the officials, was precisely that it made possible the indirect raising of taxes. The resistance of farmers to changes in tax rates that had acquired strong customary sanction has been a serious problem not only for Chinese but for most premodern governments. Commutation, by introducing market considerations into rural taxation, enabled the government to maintain constant tax rates but, at the same time, to collect more taxes.

The Sung central government often *did* try to limit commutation abuses. For commutation into other commodities, only locally produced goods were to be demanded and their value was to be calculated according to current market prices, such as the prices prevailing in the final third of the preceding month. Market prices were also to be observed for commutation from goods into cash. In practice, local officials and clerks could easily make use of the variability of market prices and the consequent impossibility of effective supervision by the central government to collect extra taxes either for themselves or to help meet the costs of the yamen. Commutation manipulations of every possible kind were rampant in the Southern Sung: absurdly low values placed on goods paid, successive commutations in which the taxpayer was bilked a little more at each step, rounding out fractions to the next-highest whole unit. Though all taxpayers were affected, it was unquestionably the poor, with more limited access to the market, who were hit most severely.

The Sung head tax (*shen-ting chien/mi*, *k'ou-fu*), heir to 1,500 hundred years of various regressive taxes on individuals, was ordinarily calculated and paid either in cash or in rice but occasionally in other items such as wheat, spun silk or salt. In line with a long-term trend away from such taxes, the government collected the head tax only in southeast and south China, where it had originated during the Five Dynasties period, and never extended it to the north or to Szechwan. This tax displayed considerable local variation during the Sung, even to the point of being completely transformed into an assessment according to landholdings in certain areas during the Southern Sung. Ordinarily,

⁴⁵ By comparison with officials in other dynasties, Sung officials were well paid; Gang Deng, *The premodern Chinese economy: Structural equilibrium and capitalist sterility* (London and New York, 1999), pp. 302–3.

however, the head tax was a relatively light levy on all adult males from age twenty to fifty-nine, without distinction between resident and migrant households (*chu-hu*, *k'o-hu*).⁴⁶ The rate usually was between 150 and 360 cash per person per year, though it sometimes went as high as 500 or 700 cash. It was ordinarily collected with the summer tax.

Pacification, finance supervision, and monthly remitted cash

In the Southern Sung, earlier miscellaneous taxes tended to persist and become heavier while a wide variety of new taxes were added. But that by itself does not account for the importance that revenue from these sources came to have in the finances of the central government. It was all very well for the court to issue decrees ordering slight increases in this or that existing tax; officials and clerks displayed breathtaking ingenuity in devising ever more detailed and complicated means of extracting a little more from the harried taxpayer. The multitude of relatively minor sources of revenue, however, might have hopelessly overloaded the never too effective accounting procedures of the central government unless a means could be found to simplify their reporting. This need for simplification and consolidation was met by a new revenue category, pacification and finance supervision cash that lumped together into one or two quotas the total central-government share from the most important miscellaneous taxes and surcharges.

As was often the case with new taxes, the beginnings of pacification and finance supervision cash were modest. In 1121, to help meet the expenses incurred in putting down the Fang La rebellion (1120–1), the Pacification Commissioner (*ching-chih shih*) Ch'en Kou (often referred to by his style, Heng-po, 1090–1127) was authorized to increase tax revenues throughout the southeast by adding a small surcharge to a number of collections such as the commercial tax, wine charges and the rental fees for government lands and buildings. These surcharges were combined into a separate revenue category called "pacification cash" (*ching-chih ch'ien*). By way of justifying the new levy, it was emphasized that the charge in any single instance would be small. Furthermore, it would fall only on those who voluntarily made themselves liable to it, for example, by drinking wine or renting government property. This spurious justification suggests, at best, willful blindness; at worst, downright dishonesty. It conveniently ignored the fact that surcharge cash (*t'ou-tzu ch'ien*), an arbitrary charge since 1114 of an extra five cash for every string of revenue sent to the central government, was now to be almost quintupled to twenty-three cash per string, ten of which were to go into the

⁴⁶ Yanagida Setsuko, "Sōdai no teizei," *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 20 No. 2 (1961), here pp. 1–2.

pacification-cash account. Even local officials became a target, being required to contribute 1 percent of their salaries to the pacification-cash fund.

Financially, the first implementation of pacification cash had a short but successful history. In 1123, it was extended to the north, where it raised almost 2 million strings yearly. In an attempt to win public support against the Chin, however, the government rescinded it in 1126, though the Pacification Cash Office (*Ching-chih ssu*) continued in existence.

In 1128-9, a hard-pressed court once again ordered the collection of pacification cash throughout the southeast. At first, the items included were essentially the same as in the earlier implementation but, in 1131, the scope of the tax was considerably broadened with the order that it was also to include all local revenues from which the central government was not collecting a fixed quota (for example, interest on funds lent by local officials). In 1132, presumably in an effort to trim unnecessary offices, the Pacification Cash Office was abolished, although pacification cash continued to be collected. But the government soon found that a special office was needed to see that required local revenues made their way to the capital. In 1135, the Office for the Supervision of State Finances (*Tsung-chih ssu*) was created at the request of the Participant in Determining Governmental Affairs (*Ts'an-chih cheng-shih*), Meng Yü, who became its first commissioner. At the same time, a new tax was implemented, finance supervision cash (*ts'ung-chih ch'ien*), which resembled pacification cash in grouping collections from a number of miscellaneous taxes into a new tax category. A number of its more than fifteen component taxes also reveal the central government's intention to take for itself a portion of certain tax charges that had, until then, been used exclusively for local-government needs.

Technically, pacification cash and finance supervision cash remained two separate accounts. Nevertheless, because of their essential similarity, officials more often than not referred to and handled them as one account (*ching-tsung chih ch'ien*). In the mid-twelfth century, they produced a maximum of over 17 million strings yearly (excluding receipts in Szechwan, which were another 5.4 million-plus strings); afterwards, the quota was reduced to 14.4 million strings (pacification cash: 6.6 million; finance supervision cash: 7.8 million) and this appears to have remained constant at least into the early thirteenth century. Pacification and finance supervision cash thus amounted together to one-half of the amount collected in regular agricultural taxes (*ch'ang-fu*) and about one-fifth of all the non-Szechwan revenue collected by the central government.

A third Southern Sung tax, often mentioned together with pacification and finance supervision cash as one of the three major new taxes at this time, was the cash monthly remitted to the imperial armies (*yüeh-chuang ta-chün ch'ien*), usually shortened to monthly remitted cash (*yüeh-chuang ch'ien*).

Monthly remitted cash originated in 1132 when the fiscal commissioner of Chiang-tung circuit (*Chiang-nan-tung chuan-yün shih*) was ordered to divert 100,000 strings monthly for the support of the army of Han Shih-chung (1089–1151). This was one more variation on the idea that areas where troops were stationed bore a special responsibility for their upkeep. The money was to come from tax payments destined for the central government (*shang-kung ch'ien*), pacification cash, wine revenues and funds from the fiscal commissioner's office. The remitted cash thus was originally not a new or increased tax but merely a new expenditure category. It was also intended only as a temporary response to military costs, to be abolished when the conflict with the Chin was settled. In 1133, it was extended to those areas of southeast and south central China where troops were stationed; new revenue sources, such as surplus funds held by the prefectures and legal charges, were added.⁴⁷ In reality, all of the sources authorized covered only 10 to 20 percent of the amount to be remitted and the fiscal commissioners were forced to demand fixed quotas of monthly remitted cash from each of their prefectures. The prefectures passed the burden on to the counties, which devised whatever means they could for collecting it. From an expenditure category, the monthly remitted cash became in fact a new tax. Peace with the Chin did not bring its cancellation and it continued throughout the Southern Sung, though quotas were somewhat lightened during the reign of Hsiao-tsung (1162–89). In general, monthly remitted cash accounted for some 4 million strings of revenue yearly until the later years of the dynasty when rising military expenses led to repeated increases.

The Adjustment of Tribute reform

Besides taxes in cash, grain, cloth, and precious metals, the Sung government also collected a wide variety of commodities such as domestic animals, leather, wool, fodder, medicinal plants, oils, paper, charcoal, and lacquer. Some of these items were paid in commutation for taxes assessed in grain or cash, while many consisted of tribute (*kung*) payments theoretically from areas where the items were produced. T'an-chou (modern Ch'ang-sha), for instance, was required to contribute 1,780,000 sheets of paper yearly in the early Sung. Tribute from southeast China was especially important.

The great difficulty with tribute contributions was their inflexibility. Codified by custom, they were even more difficult to modify than taxes. As a result, in a period when the government's commodity requirements were

⁴⁷ In a legal dispute between two parties, the party that lost had to pay a fine (*fa-ch'ien*) while the party that won was required to pay "elation cash" (*huan-hsi ch'ien*), also called "salt and vinegar cash" (*yen-ts'u ch'ien*).

undergoing great changes, tribute collections were less and less able to keep pace. The government found itself forced to sell at bargain prices commodities which had been shipped to the capital at considerable expense and which often represented a serious burden to the contributing areas. Benefiting from this state of affairs were the merchants who were in a position to buy up goods and then ship them wherever they commanded attractive prices.

The Adjustment Tribute Policy (its full name was "Adjustment of Tribute from the Six Southeast Circuits," *Tung-nan liu-lu chün-shu fa*) was one of the first of Wang An-shih's reforms to be implemented, perhaps because Hsüeh Hsiang (1016-81), who directed it, had previously conducted similar experiments locally. As Yang-chou commissioner of exchange, Hsüeh was ordered to make a study of the availability in the southeast of the kinds of goods required by the government. The Finance Commission, for its part, was to draw up a list of what, and how much, it required. The goods were then to be obtained as expeditiously as possible.

The immediate effects and later history of this reform are unclear. Though it does not seem to have continued formally for more than two or three years, it is quite possible that, as a precedent, it stimulated at least sporadic efforts afterwards to bring tribute contributions better into line with government needs. The tribute burden on the localities may also have been eased somewhat by the implementation of the State Trade Policy (see below), which promoted a freer circulation of commodities and made it easier for localities to obtain the items required of them in tribute.

Registration and limitation of landholdings

Long before the beginning of the Sung, the once prevalent idea that all land in the empire belonged to the emperor had, for all practical purposes, been quietly buried. In the Sung, even tenants (*tien-hu*) who worked government land (*kuan-t'ien*) acquired legal claims to it, claims which could be bought and sold. By the Sung, land had become primarily a basis for assessing taxes and labor services. As a result, the government sought to ensure accurate records (for determining the responsible taxpayers) and to limit the amounts of land held tax-exempt. Both goals were extremely difficult to achieve. The ready transferability of land and refined procedures for concealing transfers, the problems of surveying land and determining its quality, and collusion between wealthy landowners and officials all played havoc with the records. Limiting tax-exempt land was even more difficult since most of the exempted land was held by the families of officials who resisted with all their considerable power any threat to their privileges and above all anything that threatened the very foundation of their political and social position. The government tried a

variety of policies to meet these two problems, but seldom with better than mediocre results.⁴⁸

The first Sung effort in this area was T'ai-tsu's Equitable Tax Law (*Chün-shui fa*), the continuation and extension of a Later Chou (951–60) policy by which landholders were themselves to report the extent and quality of their land. Taxes were to be reapportioned on the basis of these reports, and prefectures and counties were forbidden to use the law as a subterfuge to increase taxes. To judge by the lack of information in the sources, it does not seem to have had any significant results. A similar attempt under the same name at the beginning of the reign of Chen-tsung fared no better. In 1022, the first year of Jen-tsung's reign (1022–63), the government implemented an ambitious law that sought to apply a brake to the amassing of huge estates by officials, setting an absolute limit on the amount of land they could possess. The highest officials were to be limited to thirty *ch'ing* or about 420 acres. Opposition from the officials – in many ways it was *their* government – forced its abandonment.

During the latter part of the reign of Jen-tsung, from 1043 onwards, a number of efforts were made in various areas to bring land and tax records up to date (*ch'ien-pu fang-t'ien fa*). In contrast to earlier attempts to induce self-reporting, the aim now was new land surveys supervised by officials. Land was to be divided into equal squares (*fang*) consisting of something over 580 acres each. Tax quotas were to be reassigned on the basis of the fertility of the land in a square, with farmers paying a proportion of a given square's quota according to the percentage of its land they cultivated. These attempts, largely unsuccessful at the time, became the precedent for the Land Survey and Equitable Tax Law (*Fang-t'ien chün-shui fa*) of Wang An-shih. Wang implemented this policy only in the north, perhaps because the larger, contiguous landholdings in the north were particularly suitable for this kind of survey or perhaps because it was in the north that labor service burdens were heaviest. In any case, partly because of his strong determination, the results were impressive. We know little about exactly how the actual surveying was carried out at the village level but, by 1085, 2,484,349 *ch'ing*, or some 35 million acres, had been recorded. Though the new law had been applied to well *under* one-half of the empire, the figure for area under cultivation was well *over* half the total cultivated land for the entire empire as had been recorded twenty years earlier. The conservatives later abolished the Land Survey and Equitable Tax Law, but it was reimplemented from 1104 under the forceful sponsorship of the Chief Councilor Ts'ai Ching (1047–1126), who applied it not only to the north but

⁴⁸ Of course, the Sung government did much better here than the Ming when, in the whole dynasty, only one effort (by Chang Chü-cheng, 1525–82) was made at a countrywide land survey. Ray Huang, *Taxation and governmental finance in sixteenth-century Ming China* (Cambridge, 1974), p. 300.

to the entire empire, including Szechwan. Widespread abuses, however, forced its cancellation in 1121. The Southern Sung government continued the efforts to make tax registers conform to reality, sometimes with official surveys like the "land survey measure" (*ching-chieh fa*) but often with self-reporting. It did not make any attempt, however, to base land taxes on squares of equal size, a policy very difficult to apply to south China paddy. Moreover, given the firm landlord domination of the villages in the Southern Sung, it is unlikely that these efforts went far to eradicate inequitable taxes.

In the attack on tax exemption, the government issued from the late Northern Sung onward increasingly strict measures limiting the amount of land for which officials could claim the privileges of paying the half-rate supplementary labor service tax (see below); on lands above the limit the full amount was to be paid. In the Cheng-ho era (1111-18), the limit became 100 *ch'ing* for the highest-ranked officials down to 10 *ch'ing* for ninth-grade officials. In 1172, these limits were halved. The effectiveness of these limitations, however, was very much watered down by the government's inability to bring to light secret, unregistered lands.

At the very end of the dynasty, Chia Ssu-tao (1213-75), who has been unfairly castigated in traditional Chinese historiography,⁴⁹ took on the enormous task of trying to set a ceiling on total landholdings. Under his Public Fields Law (*Kung-t'ien fa*), which Herbert Franke has characterized, not without reason, as "revolutionary," the government limited to a maximum of five *ch'ing* the amount of land that could be held by any official and, later, any private landlord. The state reserved, and exercised, the right to buy up one-third of the land over the limit. It then transformed this land into public fields for the support of the army. This policy was implemented despite fierce opposition and, by the end of the dynasty, state lands alone provided all the grain needed by the army. The very success of the policy exacted a price in weakened landlord commitment to the dynasty, and it has been speculated that this was an important factor in the fall of the dynasty a few years later.

LABOR SERVICE

No other topic in the Sung financial administration matches the complexity of the labor service system, with its many local variations. The following discussion will confine itself to developments characteristic of the overall system, or large parts of it. For convenience, it is divided into three periods: (a) the

⁴⁹ Herbert Franke, "Chia Ssu-tao (1213-1275): A 'bad last minister'?" in *Confucian personalities*, ed. Arthur F. Wright and Denis C. Twitchett (Stanford, 1962), pp. 217-34.

first century of the Sung, (b) the reforms of Wang An-shih, and (c) 1085 to the end of the dynasty.

The first century

Perhaps the most important thing to be said about labor service in the Sung is that there was less of it than in earlier periods. This trend emerges clearly even in the two decades in which the Sung founder and his brother were still consolidating the empire. During the preceding Five Dynasties, local authorities had relied extensively on rotational labor service (*yao-i*, *tša-yao*) to provide manpower for physical labor such as the construction and repair of public works, transport of tax goods, and manning the postal-courier system. The dominance at that time of the military and military values did not encourage the use of soldiers in nonmilitary tasks. Under the Sung, this situation was reversed. With the emasculation of the provincial armies and the evolution of a civil order with civil values, including the idea that soldiers ought to be productive if possible, the local soldiery became a large labor pool available for much of the physical work formerly demanded of peasants performing labor service. Even when circumstances required more labor than could be provided by soldiers, the officials often preferred to hire laborers rather than resort to cumbersome labor service procedures. Requisitioned labor services (*ch'ai-i*) were increasingly used only for those tasks where the responsibilities made them inappropriate for handling by soldiers or hired labor; such tasks included tax collecting, maintaining law and order in the villages, and supervising the transport of tax goods. Since these functions often involved financial responsibility, the government sought to have them performed as far as possible by members of relatively well-to-do families.⁵⁰

Apart from tax collecting, peace-keeping and various kinds of physical labor, local officials also required a number of clerical personnel to perform routine administrative tasks at the yamen. Moreover, with the increasing complexity of administration in the Sung, these tasks became more numerous and more difficult, many of them requiring training and special abilities beyond the capacity of labor service recruits. This led to the proliferation of full-time clerks (*li*, *hsü-li*) and even families with a clerical tradition where jobs were passed on from father to son to grandson. Strictly speaking, the clerks do not belong in a discussion of labor service, since theirs were commonly permanent, voluntary jobs. Nevertheless, they were an integral part of the government's

⁵⁰ It was primarily for assigning labor services that the traditional practice of dividing rural households into nine ranks (*teng*) was preserved in the countryside. In cities, a ten-rank system prevailed and was used mainly to assess contributions of goods for official use.

need for local labor of various kinds and, as we shall see below, the government itself was very reluctant to admit that the clerks represented a problem outside the traditional labor service framework.

The post of office serviceman (*ya-ch'ien*), heaviest of the Northern Sung labor services, illustrates the problems of the system at its worst. Office servicemen were ordinarily required to supervise the transport of tax goods or to provide for the daily needs of the officials. Both tasks required them to dip liberally into their own resources. The serviceman assigned to supervise a shipment of tax goods was expected to make up any losses from spoilage, pilferage by porters and sailors, or loss of ships. He also had to submit to extortion by officials and clerks in the tax posts through which he passed. To ensure that he would have the funds to do so, the government limited the pool of office servicemen to those families whose wealth was assessed at 200 strings or more. Land was, of course, the major determinant of wealth. Therefore, as official families who were exempt from labor service amassed land, the pool of eligible office servicemen shrank. The number declined still more as the remaining families resorted to various subterfuges to avoid the service: breaking up families, concealing the birth of sons, bribing officials and clerks. The lack of eligible servicemen and the frequent ruin of families unlucky enough to be caught for the duty increasingly prompted concern not only locally but even in the central government.

This bleak picture, however, portrays only one side of the office serviceman story. In some parts of the empire, especially economically advanced areas such as the southeast and Szechwan, the post of office serviceman had become so attractive that people were volunteering for it, often repeatedly. We do not know which were the most important factors contributing to the increase of volunteer office servicemen (*ch'ang-ming ya-ch'ien*, *t'ou-ming ya-ch'ien*). Certainly, given the more favorable transportation conditions in the south, supervision of tax shipments must have been less burdensome than in the north. Also, the flourishing economy of the south provided the prefectures with much greater and more varied sources of revenue for meeting the costs of local administration; they could therefore lean less heavily on the office servicemen and could even offer them attractive compensations such as the opportunity to manage relatively lucrative wineries for their own profit. In any case, the central government was well aware of this development and many of its efforts around the mid-eleventh century to solve the problems of office servicemen focused on making the post attractive enough to draw volunteers.⁵¹

⁵¹ Around the year 1050, there was a general order to use hired office servicemen instead of assigning the duty as a labor service; Cheng Hsüeh-meng, Chiang Chao-ch'eng, and Chang Wen-ch'i, *Chien-ming Chung-kuo ching-chi t'ung-shih* (Harbin, 1984), p. 258.

The rise of professionalism among office servicemen in certain regions thus paralleled the earlier and more highly developed trend toward professional clerks. In the latter case, however, the government was reluctant to admit what was happening. The preservation of the myth that lower-level administration at the local yamen was being performed by labor servicemen was a matter of convenience: as long as it was a labor service problem, the central government could leave prime responsibility to local officials who were more familiar with local needs and resources. Especially, it did not have to concern itself greatly with the appointment and dismissal procedures for clerks or, more importantly, with their salaries.⁵² In practice, some clerks did receive a subsistence salary, enough for food and clothes but no more; any supplement had to come from handling charges, tips, bribes, and the like. Other clerks, especially at poorer yamens, had to support themselves entirely from irregular sources. A system better designed to encourage corrupt practices among the clerks can hardly be imagined.

To sum up, then, in the period just before Wang An-shih, the problem of office servicemen and other inequities in the labor service system were still awaiting an effective solution, while rampant corruption among the clerks was becoming increasingly difficult for the government to ignore.

The reforms of Wang An-shih

At the heart of Wang's approach to the dual problem of clerical abuses and heavy labor service was the conviction that the government should not only admit and accept the professionalism that had already appeared, but also encourage it. Under the Granaries Law (*Ts'ang-fa*), sometimes called the Liberal Salaries Law (*Chung-lu fa*), all clerks were to be given livable and even generous salaries that would make it possible for them to perform their jobs honestly. A stringent schedule of penalties was enacted to deal with those who still resorted to illegal activities.

Labor services were the object of the Hired Service System (*Mu-i fa*), also called the Service Exemption System (*Mien-i fa*). Rural households of the fourth class and above (this exempted the very large number of the poorest, fifth- through ninth-class households) were to pay a service exemption tax (*mien-i ch'ien*) calculated ordinarily on the value of their registered landholdings. Households previously exempt from labor service – official households, households without at least two male adults, urban households, and temples – now had to pay a supplementary service tax (*chu-i ch'ien*) at one-half the rate of

⁵² Given the more than a million service personnel of one kind or another, the central government's reluctance to take an active role in this question is understandable.

the regular exemption tax. With the money derived from these taxes, the government was able to eliminate all labor services outside the villages, including the office servicemen. Within the villages, only a partial transformation of village services into paid posts was intended. Moreover, village duties rapidly got caught up under the *pao-chia* system, an attempt to strengthen the Sung armies with an effective militia and to provide better policing of the countryside (see below); this resulted in the retention of considerable labor service obligations in the village and a surplus of service taxes that could be spent on other purposes.

Finally, in an effort to reduce the requirement for local labor, the reformers eliminated or consolidated forty prefectures and 120 counties, approximately one-tenth of all the prefectures and counties in the empire. This move provoked cries of anguish from officials who saw a corresponding decline in the number of official posts to be filled and from merchants unhappy to lose the business that official establishments brought in their wake. In fairness, it must be said that some of the changes seem to have resulted in administratively unwieldy prefectures and counties. In any case, this particular reform registered little in the way of permanent results since most of the abolished prefectures and counties were later restored by the conservatives.

1085 to the end of the dynasty

The dismantling of the Hired Service System by the conservatives in 1085 displays vividly the general bankruptcy of their alternatives to Wang's reforms. Since the tasks covered by the Hired Service System had to be performed in any case, they unimaginatively attempted to return to the assigned-services system of twenty years earlier. But too much had changed in the meantime and the policy met great resistance, especially in the south. The extremely poor results of this resolute step backwards gave rise to rumors that the reformers would be recalled to power. Threatened, the conservatives resorted to personal intrigues that brought their confrontation with the reformers to new depths of bitterness, from which they themselves were ultimately to suffer. The return to power of the reformers after only eight years brought an official restoration of the Hired Service System. From that time to the end of the Southern Sung, the basic outline of the system remained essentially unchanged.

No comparable attack seems to have been made by the conservatives on the granaries law. As a result, at the government offices the long-term trend toward professional clerks continued and the Southern Sung witnessed an enormous increase in their number. Something of a similar movement toward more professionalization of village labor service also appeared by the second half of the twelfth century. By that time, local officials were frequently allowing those

responsible for village service to hire substitutes. Now further efforts were made to ease the cost burden both on those who personally served and on those who hired substitutes. The best-known of these attempts was the so-called "charitable service" (*i-i*), an originally grassroots initiative (later supported by the government) which consisted of the creation of endowed funds whose revenue was used to compensate village officers.⁵³ By the end of the twelfth century, these funds (sometimes called "charitable foundations," *i-ch'an*) were in some areas sufficiently prosperous to support other activities quite unrelated to their original intent, such as caring for widows and orphans. Charitable service continued as a local option in much of the country until the end of the dynasty.⁵⁴

Encouragement of agriculture

In addition to its efforts to make agricultural taxes more equitable, the government was also active in promoting agricultural production, both on ideological grounds that emphasized a healthy rural order where peasants could above all grow enough food to meet the needs of the whole population, and because of the recognition that agricultural taxes, even as they represented a declining portion of total revenue, were indispensable to the government's fiscal health. Popularizing the best of existing agricultural knowledge was an important concern: during the reign of T'ai-tsung, the government encouraged people in south China to diversify their crops and not rely excessively on rice, a practice that maximized the harm caused by drought.⁵⁵ The initiative of Chen-tsung in promoting the planting of early-ripening Champa (Chan-ch'eng) rice is a famous example of intelligent concern by the government for the use of the best agricultural seeds and techniques.⁵⁶ In 1182, under Hsiao-tsung, a new strain of wheat that had been experimented with in the palace gardens was promoted in various regions of the empire.⁵⁷ The government also manufactured agricultural tools and distributed them to farmers, and exempted oxen and sometimes grain from commercial taxes.

⁵³ Brian E. McKnight, *Village and bureaucracy in Southern Sung China* (Chicago, 1971), pp. 71, 157–70. Ch'i, *Sung-tai ching-chi shih*, Volume 1, pp. 492–9.

⁵⁴ Or at least the southeast; McKnight, *Village and bureaucracy*, p. 160 n. 28.

⁵⁵ "Getting out the message" was now much easier for Chinese governments because of the availability of woodblock printing, which made easy the printing and posting of large numbers of proclamations.

⁵⁶ Ho Ping-ti, "Early-ripening rice in Chinese history," *Economic History Review*, new series 9 No. 2 (1956), pp. 200–18.

⁵⁷ Gong Wei Ai (Chiang Wei-ai), "Imperial policy and national finance: The role of Hsiao-tsung in the consolidation of southern Sung finance," in *Kuo-chi Sung shih yen-t'ao-hui lun-wen chi*, ed. Kuo-chi Sung shih yen-t'ao-hui mi-shu-ch'u (Taipei, 1988), pp. 141–58, 154 n. 25. See also p. 143 for the keen interest of Kao-tsung (r. 1127–62) in promoting agriculture.

Exhortations to farmers to improve their fields, to return to deserted fields or to open up new lands were frequently made more persuasive by tax incentives, by the granting of official titles to farmers who responded, and by rewarding officials who successfully sponsored such projects.⁵⁸

Under direct government auspices, a great deal of land was reclaimed in the Sung and much land under cultivation was improved, especially through the construction of irrigation works that made possible the conversion of dry fields into more productive paddy. During the reign of Shen-tsung, in accord with the Regulations on Land Reclamation and Water Conservancy, these activities were pursued with special vigor: according to official reports, agricultural water projects of various kinds were carried out at 17,000 places, affecting some 361,000 *ch'ing* (over 4 million acres) or approximately 8 percent of the total registered land under cultivation.

Another measure to promote agricultural production and to preserve tax revenues while also generating revenues of its own was the Green Sprouts or Farming Loans Policy (*Ch'ing-miao fa*) of Wang An-shih.⁵⁹ Like many of Wang's reforms, it had a variety of purposes and defies easy classification. Since we shall discuss it further below in connection with the price-regulating granaries, it will be sufficient here to note that this measure offered loans at moderate rates (by the standards of the time) to middle and small farmers who were chronically short of capital, particularly at the spring planting. These loans would enable the farmers to avoid turning to private moneylenders, many of whom were large landlords whose holdings and profits were on the rise. Indebtedness of small farmers and concentration of landholdings went hand in hand since foreclosure offered landlords the least expensive way to acquire new land, cheaper by far than buying it. Thus, while Wang was concerned with the plight of the small farmers and believed that independent farmers worked the land more efficiently than debt-ridden tenants, he also realized that this policy would inhibit further concentration of land, together with its negative effects on agricultural taxes. This helps explain the determination with which Wang pushed the Green Sprouts Policy and also the fierce opposition it provoked, not essentially different from the

⁵⁸ For seven major efforts of this kind in just the years from 960 to 1029, see Kusano Yasushi, "Sōdai no kokō tōkei jō ni iwayuru kyakko ni tsuite," *Shien* 79 (July 1959), p. 112.

⁵⁹ For a good description and assessment of this policy, which he presents as an example of the "bureaucratic entrepreneurship" promoted by Wang An-shih, see Paul Jakov Smith, "State power and economic activism during the New Policies, 1068–1085: The tea and horse trade and the 'Green Sprouts' loan policy," in *Ordering the world: Approaches to state and society in Sung dynasty China*, ed. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 76–127, esp. 89–93, 96–8, 105–7, 108–9, 111–18. For the Southern Sung, see Richard von Glahn, "Community and welfare: Chu Hsi's community granary in theory and practice," in *Ordering the World: Approaches to state and society in Sung dynasty China*, ed. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 221–54, 227–34.

opposition that met any serious government efforts to register accurately, or to limit, landholdings. Not until just before the end of the dynasty would the government finally devise and implement effective measures to combat the rise of ever richer, ever more powerful, and increasingly less taxable landlords.

State farmlands

If the *pao-chia* system, which will be discussed below, was an attempt to make soldiers out of farmers, state farmlands (*t'un-t'ien*; *ying-t'ien*) were often an attempt to make farmers out of soldiers. These farms had a long history dating back to the early Han (206 BC–AD 220). The government would settle people on lands, especially along the border; in exchange for official loans of tools, seeds, draught animals, and the like, it collected a percentage of the harvest, regularly between 40 and 60 percent. In this way, lands that might otherwise have lain fallow were brought under cultivation and made to produce revenue for the government. When used along frontiers where large numbers of soldiers were stationed, the system had the important added advantage of increasing the supply of grain precisely where it was most needed.

In the Sung, the earlier distinction between state farmlands settled by soldiers and those settled by civilians tended to disappear; soldiers and civilians often farmed side by side in the same areas, ordinarily called *ying-t'ien*. During the Northern Sung, and increasingly after the 1130s, these lands were set up extensively along the northern borders in Ho-pei (Ho-pei lu), Ho-tung and Shan-hsi circuits and manned by "bow-and-arrow" militia (*kung-chien shou*) composed of both Chinese and non-Chinese residents of these areas. At Chen-jung chün in Ch'in-feng circuit (Ch'in-feng lu), for instance, where the bow-and-arrow militia was first established in 1005, it included 7,900 men in 1028 and had brought under cultivation over 220,000 acres. In Shan-hsi in the late 1060s, 46,300 bow-and-arrow militiamen were farming some 1 million acres. As mentioned above, the economic and military success of these local projects fired Wang An-shih's optimism for the possibilities of the *pao-chia* militia.

In the Southern Sung, state farmlands were widely set up south of the Huai River along the border with the Chin, and provided a large part of the provisions needed for the army. In contrast to the Northern Sung, the practice of using soldiers on these and on similar fields farther south tended to disappear and the land came to be organized into estates (*chuang*) of several *ch'ing* (one *ch'ing* = fourteen acres) under an estate manager (*chien-chuang*) who supervised the civilian tenants (*tien-hu*). The management of state farmlands thus became very similar to practices used on other kinds of government-owned land (*kuan-t'ien*), such as educational fields (*hsüeh-t'ien*), confiscated

fields (*mo-kuan t'ien*) and office fields (*chih-t'ien*). When the government, for various reasons including problems of corruption and charges of economic counterproductivity, decided from time to time to sell off its lands, state farmlands were often included, though not in border areas where their production was needed to feed the armies.

CITIES, COMMERCIAL TAXES, AND MONOPOLIES

Urban taxes

The ability of the Sung government to collect with relative ease far greater amounts of tax revenue than its predecessors rested ultimately on its successful response to new developments in the Chinese economy, especially the expansion of commerce. Had the government adopted the traditional emphasis on agricultural taxation, the highest rates possible and all the improvements that might have been made in tax-collecting procedures could not have begun to produce the amounts of revenue brought in by the commercial taxes and by its monopolies.⁶⁰ The speed and effectiveness with which traditional taxing priorities were reordered early in the dynasty can easily obscure the magnitude of these changes. They were not inevitable or irreversible: the Ming and Ch'ing governments, in their overwhelming reliance on agricultural taxes, resembled the T'ang and earlier dynasties far more than they did the Sung. It is no wonder that Ming officials could look back enviously on the amounts of tax revenue available to their Sung predecessors.⁶¹

The growth of commerce also meant more urbanization. The Sung approach to the taxation of people living in the cities (*fang-kuo hu*), who were distinguished from people living in the countryside (*hsiang-ts'un hu*), suggests that one of the reasons why new attitudes and practices in taxation could be adopted so successfully was that they were not seen to pose an either/or choice between themselves and the old. Rather, the new taxes could be combined with or used alongside older practices in a variety of ways, with convenience the only arbiter. For instance, in the late T'ang, urban residents were not subject to special categories of tax; insofar as they were liable, they paid the same biannual taxes as rural farmers. In the Five Dynasties, a house tax (*wu-shui*) began to appear in cities. The Northern Sung government continued to collect this tax in north China cities, assessing it mainly on the size and location

⁶⁰ In the late 1070s, for example, only about one-third of the government's regular revenues came from the biannual tax on agricultural production; Hartwell, "Government finance and the regional economies of China," p. 4.

⁶¹ Ray Huang, "Fiscal administration during the Ming dynasty," in *Chinese government in Ming times: Seven studies*, ed. Charles O. Hucker (New York, 1969), pp. 73-128, 126.

of houses. Yet, as with other urban taxes, it was often paid at the same time as the rural biannual tax. Harmonious purchase (*ho-mai*), originally a rural policy, spread gradually to the cities as a tax levied according to either rent paid (*chia-yeh ch'ien*) or the amount of business done by shops (*ying-yün ch'ien*). On the whole, taxes and other government impositions, including labor services and irregular, obligatory contribution or sale of goods (*ch'ai-k'o*, *k'o-shuai*, *p'ei-mai*), were rather light in cities. That this was at least partially the result of a conscious policy is clear from the comments of the censor Sun Sheng (1038–99) in 1087:

The system of requisitioned labor service is implemented in the countryside but not in the cities. The government is not unaware that this means liberal treatment for people in cities and hard labor for the rural population. But, in peaceful times, people in the cities are engaged in commerce day and night. By keeping commodities circulating, they sell the hundred products and support the countryside.⁶²

He neglects to mention, of course, that heavier general taxation in the cities was unnecessary because the bulk of the government's urban revenues came from the commercial tax and the monopolies. In any case, light taxes in the cities must have been a powerful stimulant to immigration from the countryside.

Domestic commerce

The commercial tax

Just as agricultural taxes from the Han to the Sung gradually changed from taxation on the individual or single family to taxes based on wealth, especially landed wealth, taxes on individual merchants also increasingly gave way to *ad valorem* taxes on goods transported and sold. This trend culminated in the commercial-tax system of the Sung, which set the pattern for later dynasties.⁶³

The early eleventh century marks the point at which the commercial tax (*shang-shui*) became fixed as a major source of government revenue. In the first years of the century, this levy accounted for about 4 million strings of cash yearly, between one-fourth and one-fifth of the government's total cash revenue. By 1021, the figure had risen to 12 million strings and in 1041 it stood at more than 19,750,000 strings, or five times the total of forty years

⁶² HCP (1979) 394, p. 24a–b.

⁶³ For background on marketing before the Sung, cf. references in Denis C. Twitchett, "The T'ang market system," *Asia Major*, new series 12 No. 2 (1966), p. 241 n. 222; Denis C. Twitchett, "Merchant, trade and government in late T'ang," *Asia Major*, new series 14 No. 1 (1968), p. 71 n. 27.

earlier.⁶⁴ Moreover, since the commercial tax also brought in significant revenues for local use, these figures, indicating only the amount sent to the central government, actually understate its importance.

The two basic components of the commercial tax were a transit tax (*kuo-shui*) on commodities being transported and a sales tax (*chu-shui*) collected when goods were retailed and, sometimes, when they were purchased by traders from the producers. These taxes were paid at commercial-tax offices (*shui-wu*, *shui-ch'ang*). Over 2,000 of these had been established by the 1070s, not only in major administrative cities but also in commercially thriving towns and markets, large and small, as well as at passes, bridges, and other key transport points.⁶⁵

At the beginning of the dynasty, the transit tax, a 2 percent *ad valorem* assessment, had something of a bad reputation. It had developed earlier as a means of taxing the activities of traveling merchants (*k'o-shang*) who could not be effectively taxed in their home areas. Nevertheless, requiring merchants to pay on goods they were transporting, without considering the conditions of sale, was felt by some officials to be unjust. The response of the government was not to abolish the tax but to soften it by establishing the principle that, no matter how many tax offices of a given prefecture commodities might pass through, they were to be taxed only once per prefecture. In addition, to avoid the inconveniences of paying at each tax post, merchants could obtain official transit permits (*ch'ang-yin*, *kung-yin*, *kuan-yin*) allowing them to discharge all of their obligations with one lump-sum payment at their destination. Later, each tax post along the route was credited with its share of the total payment so that this system would not distort the performance records of the tax officials.

The low rates of both the transit tax and the sales tax (3 percent on retail value for the latter) remained unchanged throughout the Sung. However, the transit tax rate especially is partly illusory. From the beginning of the dynasty, transit-tax fees were supplemented by the collection of a *li-sheng* tax. This tax had originally been a charge based on the carrying capacity of vessels and vehicles but gradually developed into a supplementary transit tax based, like the original transit tax, on the value of the goods being transported. While observance of the precedents established by the early emperors kept the rate of transit tax at least formally at 2 percent, there was no such brake on *li-sheng* rates, which had developed out of local practices. By the mid-eleventh century, the *li-sheng* rate could be as high as 30 percent.

⁶⁴ Ch'i, *Sung tai ching-chi shi*, Volume 2, p. 1009.

⁶⁵ Lawrence J. C. Ma, *Commercial development and urban change in Sung China* (960-1279) (Ann Arbor, 1971), pp. 60-73. As mentioned above (p. 144), commercial tax collection was largely in the hands of the fiscal commissioners.

From the late Northern Sung onward, many other surcharges (*t'ou-tzu ch'ien*, *ch'i-fen tseng-shui ch'ien*, and others) were added to the basic commercial tax rates. Merchants also had to submit to the abuses of clerks (*chuan-lan*, *lan-t'ou*), who were coming to play an increasingly important role in the collection of commercial taxes. The government made repeated efforts to see that only legal charges were collected by local officials and clerks, but the very repetition of the orders makes clear that they had only limited effects. Though tax offices could be ordered to display clearly the charges for various items, this did not prevent the clerks from posting a rate schedule conspicuously when there was an official inspection, only to hide it away afterwards.

Merchants and the reforms

Apart from the Adjustment of Tribute Policy, discussed above, the two reform measures that affected most directly the activities of merchants were the State Trade Policy and the Guild Exemption Tax (*Mien-hang ch'ien*). The original policy to bear the name "State Trade Policy" was implemented in 1070. It sought to break the power of certain merchants in west China who had succeeded in monopolizing trade with the Tibetans.⁶⁶ The government's major goal was to bring this trade under the same kind of firm control that it exercised over other foreign trade and to take a substantial share of the profits.

What is usually referred to as the State Trade Policy, however, was a separate measure, implemented in 1072, which shared with the earlier policy only the goal of trimming the monopolistic powers of rich merchants. In this case, the culprits were small groups of merchants who had the means to control the wholesale trade of an entire city. These wholesalers were able to exploit smaller merchants, including traveling merchants who delivered commodities from other areas; operating with little or no capital reserve, these traveling merchants could be forced to sell their goods at low prices and even at a loss. Unwilling to accept such risks, many such merchants simply ceased delivering goods. As a result, commodities piled up where they were produced while artificial scarcities were created at consumption

⁶⁶ Liang Keng-yao, "Shih-i fa shu," *Kuo-li Tai-wan ta-hsieh li-shih hsiieh-hsi hsiieh-pao* Nos. 10-11 (December 1984), pp. 180-3. In the latter decades of the eleventh century and in the early twelfth century, the government was paying yearly 4,000 tons of monopoly tea to Central Asian merchants to obtain 20,000 stallions; Robert M. Hartwell, "Foreign trade, monetary policy, and Chinese 'mercantilism'," in *Ryū Shiken bakase shōju kinen Sōshi kenkyū ronshū*, ed. Kinugawa Tsuyoshi (Kyōto, 1989), pp. 453-88, 458. For policies of the Sung government on tea and horses, see the important work Smith, *Taxing heaven's storehouse*; and two reviews: Peter J. Golas in the *Journal of Asian Studies* 51 No. 2 (May 1992), pp. 391-3; and Hans Ulrich Vogel in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 53 No. 2 (December 1998), pp. 598-615.

centers, adding to the wholesalers' profits. Under the State Trade Policy, the government either bought up goods the merchants were unable to sell at a fair price, or advanced them loans with the goods as security. The interest on the loans was 10 percent a half-year, a reasonable rate by then-current standards.⁶⁷ In spite of this, the government was able to make a profit of 960,000 strings during the first two years the policy was in operation.⁶⁸

From one point of view, then, the State Trade Policy was an attempt to give freer play to supply and demand. The assumption was that this would result in commodities being transported where they were needed, thus ultimately bringing lower and more stable prices. The reformers were not unqualified advocates of open markets, however. The Guild Exemption Tax appears rather as a move in the opposite direction. Before the reforms, in exchange for special privileges they enjoyed in the market, merchants' guilds (*hang*) had often been required either to sell to the officials or to provide at their own expense goods needed by the government (*hang-i*). The burden was particularly heavy in K'ai-feng because of the requirements of both the central government and the imperial establishment. To the extent that these contributions were unpredictable, they were especially resented by the merchants. Under the Guild Exemption Tax, guild merchants were to be allowed to pay a fixed fee in exchange for exemption from any further impositions.⁶⁹ Besides making clear and consistent what would be required of the merchants, this policy was one more step in Wang's general effort to minimize contributions in kind, substituting cash payment wherever possible. By cutting down the area for maneuvering by clerks and eunuchs (*huan-kuan*), it was also hoped that the total contributions demanded of the merchants would decline appreciably. In order that the members of a given trade share the trade's obligation equally, however, all were required to become members of their respective guild. Since membership in a guild was also a qualification for State Trade loans and since the guilds continued as before to be dominated by their most powerful members, these two policies may well have resulted, on balance, in a tighter control over the market by the few and an even more effective exploitation of smaller merchants.

⁶⁷ Smith, *Taxing heaven's storehouse*, p. 354 n. 110.

⁶⁸ Liang Keng-yao ("Shih-i fa shu," pp. 187-8 and *passim*) sees a growing focus on government revenues instead of on opening up trade as the State Trade Policy expanded. Hartwell sees the State Trade Policy as one of the four "chief revenue-generating measures" of the reform period (the other three were the Green Sprouts Policy, the *pao-chia* militia system, and the Hired Service System). Hartwell, "Imperial treasuries," p. 65.

⁶⁹ Colin Jeffcott argues that the fee was paid by individual merchants and stresses that this was not a case of guild leaders or representatives negotiating with the government on behalf of all the members; Colin Jeffcott, "Government and the distribution system in Sung cities," *Papers on Far Eastern History* (Canberra) 1 (March 1970), pp. 119-52, esp. 140-1.

The government and foreign trade

An imperial order of 1137 expressed concisely the attitude toward overseas trade that prevailed in official circles during the Northern Sung and at least into the early Southern Sung:⁷⁰

The overseas trade is most lucrative. When properly managed, the profit is calculated in the millions. Is this not far better than taxing the people? It is for this reason that we give it considerable attention, in order that we may thereby lighten somewhat the burdens of the people.⁷¹

These supposed benefits did not go unchallenged. Practical-minded critics pointed to the drain on the coinage supply; despite draconian prohibitions, the export of coins to Japan, to the countries of the “southern seas” (*nan-hai*) and as far west as Africa could never effectively be stopped. Also opposed to foreign trade were certain scholars who took their Confucianism (*ju-chiao*) very seriously and viewed the flood of luxury items into China as flouting the moral order and traditional ideas of frugality. This latter position, hopelessly out of step with the times, found few supporters during most of the Sung. In a society increasingly stressing status and wealth, the enormously expensive aromatics, spices, jewels and other luxuries from the southern seas were among the most prized of status symbols. The court itself, of course, set the pace. As for the drain on bronze coins, the government preferred to try repeated prohibitions and strict penalties rather than give up the easy profit it drew from foreign trade. In view of the turning inward and away from T’ang cosmopolitanism apparent in certain areas of Sung life, it is surprising the lengths to which the government went to attract foreign traders to China.

In 987, the court sent eight officials on four trade missions to the countries of Southeast and South Asia urging them to send “tribute” to China. That the “tribute” was a euphemism for foreign trade is clear from the fact that the officials carried with them blank trading licenses. The intrepid Persian and Arab merchants (*hsi-yü shang*) who responded to the lure of the China trade

⁷⁰ For an extensive treatment of this subject, see Angela Schottenhammer’s chapter in this volume. A good, brief view of foreign trade in the Sung is Shiba Yoshinobu, “Sung foreign trade: Its scope and organization,” in *China among equals: The Middle Kingdom and its neighbors, 10th–14th centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 89–115. The notes include selective but well-chosen references to some of the best of the vast body of research on this topic in Japanese and Chinese up to that time. The relations of the government with overseas trade play a crucial role in two fine complementary studies of southern Fu-chien: Hugh R. Clark, *Community, trade, and networks: Southern Fujian province from the third to the thirteenth century* (Cambridge, 1991); and Billy K. L. So (Su Chi-lang), *Prosperity, region, and institutions in maritime China: The south Fukien pattern, 946–1368* (Cambridge, MA, 2000). Both have extremely useful bibliographies.

⁷¹ Translated in Ma, *Commercial development and urban change*, p. 34. Hartwell, “Foreign trade,” p. 454, stresses a change of policy from “enthusiastic encouragement” to “chronic restriction.”

met with very cordial treatment by the Sung government. The T'ang practice of allowing traders to settle disputes among themselves according to their own laws was preserved and the Sung government even went a step further, allowing the use of Arab law in lesser disputes between Chinese and Arabs (*Ta-shih*). Traders were often treated by officials as equals and their headmen were sometimes permitted by the government to wear the regalia of Chinese officials. Some traders settled in China and their families continued to live there, often very affluently, for generations. P'u Shou-keng (1205–90), whose surrender of the city of Ch'üan-chou to the Mongols in 1276 helped to seal the fate of the Southern Sung, is only the most famous example.⁷²

Most important for the continued growth of the trade was the restraint displayed by the government in its handling of foreign cargoes. Although import duties at times ran as high as 40 percent, the more common rate was 10 percent. When buying up those items required by the imperial household and other items such as frankincense (*ju-hsiang*), rhinoceros horns (*hsi-chiao*), coral (*shan-hu*), and agate (*ma-nao*) whose trade the government monopolized, the officials usually took care to pay prices that satisfied the merchants and encouraged further trade. It is true that many an official of the maritime trade offices (*shih-po ssu*, lit. "trading ships office") finished his tour considerably richer for the "presents" (*li-wu*) he had received from the merchants. Despite these overhead expenses, however, the merchants appear to have made comfortable profits. Moreover, if the customs officials at one port became excessive in their demands, it was not unheard of for the merchants to divert their trade to another port.

Imperial hyperbole notwithstanding, the income from import duties and the sale of monopolized imported goods seems to have been a relatively minor item of government revenue.⁷³ An exception occurred at the beginning of the Southern Sung when the central government was hard-pressed to collect 10 million strings annually; at that time, the customs office at Ch'üan-chou alone provided almost 1 million strings.⁷⁴

Trade in the north with the Liao, the Hsi Hsia, and, later, the Chin involved a number of economic, military, and diplomatic considerations whose complexity is nicely illustrated by the early history of the Sung–Liao trade. During the reign of T'ai-tsu, while subjugation of the south enjoyed first priority, trade was relatively free, with few restrictions imposed by either government. Stricter control began with the reign of T'ai-tsung and the establishment in

⁷² On P'u Shou-keng, see the works listed under Kuwabara Jitsuzō (1870–1931) in So, *Prosperity, region, and institutions in maritime China*, and So's treatment of P'u's surrender on pp. 108–11.

⁷³ Hartwell estimates that, by the late eleventh century, the volume of international trade equalled something less than 2 percent of total gross national product. Hartwell, "Foreign trade", p. 453.

⁷⁴ Hsü Sung et al., comp., *Sung hui-yao chi-kao* (1809, 1957; Peking, 1997) *Chih-kuan* 44, p. 20b.

977 of government trading offices (*chüeh-ch'ang*, *chüeh-wu*) along the border. The Sung government continued to permit the export of tea (*ch'a*), silk (*chüan*), aromatics (*hsiang-yao*), herbs, ivory (*hsiang-ya*), and other products whose trade was largely in its own hands and from which it made a substantial profit. Moreover, T'ai-tsung was especially anxious to satisfy Liao needs so that they would not interfere with his subjugation of the Northern Han (951–79), which was accomplished in 979. Nonetheless, the Sung government forbade the export of copper coins (*t'ung-ch'ien*) and any kind of information, especially geographical, that could have military value. The Liao, on their side, permitted the export of farm animals, skins, furs, ginseng, and licorice but forbade the export of grain and horses, the first because grain was in short supply and the second because horses were needed by the Sung for their armies. The Liao government also closed its eyes to the secret export of salt which could be profitably sold in north China at prices far below those of the government salt monopoly.

Taking the opportunity presented by the defeat of the Northern Han, T'ai-tsung decided on a campaign to win back the sixteen northern prefectures that had been ceded to the Liao in 937. The result was two severe defeats, with the second, in 986, virtually writing the end to further Sung hopes of expansion in the north. Relations with the Liao became even more hostile with T'ai-tsung's imposition of a complete trade embargo. Although the embargo solved for the Liao their trade deficit problem, it also deprived them of their only source of tea and silk, not only for their own use but also for trade with the Uighurs to the west. Especially severe was the lack of tea, which had already become more of a necessity than a luxury. Though the embargo was costly for the Sung, the Liao suffered more, and their frequent attacks on the Sung in the closing years of the tenth century were an attempt to force the Sung to reopen trade.

This goal was finally achieved with the signing of the treaty of Shan-yüan, following the Liao offensive of 1004. In addition to the opening of trade, the Sung agreed to offer an annual gift of 100,000 ounces of silver and 200,000 pieces of silk. This figure remained constant for almost four decades until 1042, when the Liao took advantage of the Sung war with the Hsi Hsia to obtain an increase of 100,000 ounces of silver and 100,000 pieces of silk. In 1044, an annual grant (*sui-si*) of 255,000 units of silver, silk, and tea was also awarded to the Hsi Hsia.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ In the Southern Sung, by the terms of the treaty of 1141, the Sung agreed to pay the Chin an annual tribute (*sui-kung*) of 250,000 ounces of silver and 250,000 pieces of silk. In 1164, this was reduced to an annual gift of 200,000 of each. In the early thirteenth century, a northern offensive by Chief Councilor Han T'o-chou (1152–1207) resulted in a debacle, and the amount was raised, in 1208, to 300,000 ounces of silver and 300,000 pieces of silk. Not long after, the Sung ceased payments as Mongol pressure on the Chin neutralized their threat to the south.

These peace payments, equivalent in the mid-eleventh century to the upkeep of about 15,000 soldiers, represented a small expenditure for the Sung government, less even than the amount it made, for instance, on overseas trade. A potentially serious problem, however, lay in the silver payments which, as Hino Kaisaburō (1908–89) has pointed out, were about equal to the total mined yearly in China. Despite this, silver prices suggest no shortage of silver, probably because nearly all the silver returned to China as payment for Chinese goods.⁷⁶ During the Southern Sung, for example, both the government-regulated trade along the frontier with the Chin and the illegal sea trade in rice brought in large amounts of silver and may also have brought in a significant supply of bronze coins to ease the chronic shortage of coins in the south due in part to the outflow of coins to Southeast Asia and beyond.⁷⁷

The monopolies

Various efforts have been made to devise classifications that would help bring some order to the bewildering variety of monopoly policies in the Sung. Most have not been very successful because they have focused on patterns of operation or management (for example, official production/merchant sale) where any generalizations have to cope with variations not only among the different monopolies but also within individual monopolies. A clear clue that we should be careful about oversystematizing “monopoly” operations in the Sung is the fact that the Sung government rarely issued policies designed to apply to two or more monopolies.

We do better to direct our attention to the principles that lay behind this plethora of policies. Here we find that the officials did indeed tend to work fairly consistently (though by no means always explicitly) within a framework of general goals for the monopolies and a limited number of quite straightforward preferences for ways to reach those goals. These included obtaining substantial revenues; maintaining maximum control over the production, distribution, and sale of monopoly products; maintaining as much supervisory control as possible where it was necessary to relinquish to private merchants, traders, and entrepreneurs the control that came with actual management; and using supervisory control to keep the trade in monopoly items open to more rather than fewer private participants in order to prevent the growth of private monopolies within the public monopolies.

It would, of course, be absurd to postulate a unanimity of Sung official opinion in support of these goals. Moreover, even among these few major goals,

⁷⁶ Shiba, “Foreign trade,” p. 98.

⁷⁷ For the debate on the flow of copper coins between Sung and Chin, see Shiba, “Foreign trade,” p. 103.

different officials might assign them different relative weights. Some officials were more prepared than others, for example, to trade control for increased revenue. Nevertheless, these do seem to have been the main goals, applicable to all the monopolies, on which there was considerable consensus, and they bear keeping in mind when looking at the Sung monopolies.

Salt

Tight official control over both the production and the distribution of salt characterized the early Sung salt monopoly (*chüeh-yen fa*; *chin-yen fa*).⁷⁸ Along the southeast coast, the government bought up all salt processed by private producers (*t'ing-hu*, *tsao-hu*); in the Chieh-chou area in modern Shansi, the second-most important salt center, it required neighboring farmers (*yen-ting*, *hsi-hu*) to produce salt as a labor service. To dispose of the salt, the officials relied on a variety of methods that had originated locally during the Five Dynasties or earlier. Where sericulture flourished, the government implemented the Silkworm Salt Policy (*Ts'an-yen fa*), distributing salt to the farmers when the mulberries ripened and receiving payment, in either silk or cash, after the cocoons had been spun. The Purchase by Number of Individuals Salt Policy (*Chi-k'ou mai-yen fa*), implemented along the seacoast and in other areas where private production of salt was easy, required families to buy a fixed amount of salt according to the number of members listed in their household register; the salt was paid for along with the biannual tax. In southern Fuchien, under the Family Wealth Salt Policy (*Ch'an-yen fa*), families were forced to buy salt in proportion to the value of their property. Two other policies made use of small merchants to dispose of the salt. Under the first, the government appointed shopkeeper households (*p'u-hu*) and required that they sell a certain quota of salt (*li-p'u p'ei-mai fa*); under the bidding system (*mai-p'u*), other versions of which flourished in the wine and mining monopolies, merchants volunteered to sell a certain quota of salt in a given area (*hsing-yen ti*), paying in advance the government's share of the profit. Under both of these policies, the government neatly shifted the risks involved in the distribution and sale of salt to the merchants, who could find themselves ruined by failure to meet their quota.

⁷⁸ The literature on salt and the salt monopoly in the Sung is vast. The best basic reference is the magisterial Kuo Cheng-chung, *Sung-tai yen-yeh ching-chi shih* (Peking, 1990). Also very important is Saeki Tomi, *Chügoku ensei shi no kenkyü* (Kyôto, 1987), which, though much broader in chronological scope, has 179 pages on the Sung monopoly. For the Southern Sung monopoly, see Edmund Henry Worthly Jr., "Regional control in the Southern Sung salt administration," in *Crisis and prosperity in Sung China*, ed. John Winthrop Haeger (Tucson, 1975), pp. 101-41.

Merchant participation of one kind or another in the salt monopoly seems to have been inevitable, given the scope and complexity of the operation. Just policing production required a major effort by officials. The supposed localization of salt production, often stressed as a key to the government's ability to operate a successful salt monopoly, has been overrated; it would hardly have impressed the officials charged with policing the hundreds of miles of coastline along which illegal salt could be produced rapidly and with little capital investment. The government's never-ending problem with smuggled salt belies much of the advantage it supposedly gained from localized production. Saeki Tomi (1910-2006), who studied the salt monopoly at length, estimates that the volume of illegal salt sometimes equaled the amount being handled through the monopoly.

Distributing and selling salt was even more difficult than policing production. Large parts of the empire were distant from any government salt production area. Transport of salt to these areas, with all the pilferage and corruption it invited, could rapidly eat into the substantial profits the government sought from the monopoly. It was undoubtedly those cases where distribution and sale were particularly difficult that first tempted the government to invite merchant co-operation in operating the monopoly. But the role of the merchants might have remained quite limited had it not been for the problems of supplying the armies on the northern and northwestern frontiers. We shall deal with this topic below in connection with the government's efforts to meet its growing need for grain. Here, we are concerned mainly with the opening these efforts gave to large-scale participation by private merchants in the salt monopoly.

Apart from cash, monopoly products (especially tea and salt) were the major enticements the government had to offer merchants in return for deliveries of grain to the northern frontiers; constant demand for these products even at high prices virtually guaranteed substantial profits. Thus, as early as the 980s, the government began offering, in exchange for delivered provisions, vouchers (*ch'ao*) that could be converted into salt at the lake salt production center of Chieh-chou (*che-chung fa*). Sometimes two or more merchants were authorized to sell salt competitively in the same area, possibly resulting in lower prices for consumers.

The increase of soldiers on the northern frontier during the late 1030s and early 1040s reinforced the government's dependence on supplies delivered by merchants; from this time onward, the merchant role in the selling of salt rose dramatically, a development that continued into the Southern Sung. To make the vouchers for Chieh-chou salt even more attractive, the government gave merchants the option of exchanging them either for salt or for cash. The vouchers even became popular as an exchange medium in private commercial

transactions and were frequently preferred to gold, silver, cloth, or cash, a development that did much to prepare commercial circles for the extensive use of paper currency characteristic of the late Northern and much of the Southern Sung.

The government also issued "powder salt vouchers" (*mo-yen ch'ao*) which could be exchanged for southeastern coastal salt. In contrast to the domination of the traffic in Chieh-chou salt vouchers by rice merchants at the capital, it was primarily tea merchants from the south who bought powder salt vouchers at the capital, returned home, and sold them to southeast salt merchants. By 1110, after the government had given up its remaining efforts to distribute salt in south China and had placed all distribution in the hands of merchants, more than 11 million strings' worth of powder salt vouchers were being circulated yearly. Gradually, however, the officials subverted their effectiveness as an exchange medium by adding further, unpredictable surcharges (*hsien-ti chui-cheng*) when the vouchers were converted into salt. The vouchers came increasingly to be called *yin* (instead of *ch'ao*) and to serve simply as permits to sell salt. It was essentially this system that prevailed in the Southern Sung.

One area, Ho-pei circuit, was conspicuously exempt from the salt monopoly in the Northern Sung. Whether to monopolize the salt produced along the Ho-pei coast was more than once a subject of intense discussion. The debate during the reign of Jen-tsung, at a time when rising military expenses had led to a search for every possible means of increasing revenue, reveals the complex considerations to be weighed even within a framework of maximum exploitation of the salt trade. Those who opposed the extension of the monopoly to Ho-pei argued that the result would not be an increase in revenue, that the extension would instead be self-defeating. Ho-pei's role as a base for military operations against the Liao had already imposed heavy labor-service burdens on its people. Establishing a monopoly and raising the price of salt would produce a dangerous level of dissatisfaction, probably leading to large-scale defections to the Liao. In support of this argument, it was pointed out that the Chinese in the sixteen northern prefectures that had come under Liao control in 936, contrary to what one would expect, were not at all unhappy with their lot. A major reason was that the price of salt and ferments was low in Liao territory. The monopoly would also fail to net more revenue because the Liao possessed large quantities of salt that they would undoubtedly attempt to smuggle into Ho-pei if the price of salt rose. To prevent smuggling, large numbers of soldiers would have to be posted to patrol the border, increasing the very military expenses the monopoly was designed to meet.

Bureaucratic considerations also entered the debate. Opponents of the monopoly pointed out the difficulties of controlling a salt monopoly in Ho-pei: production of salt was not localized but extended the length of the

coast. Proponents countered with the argument that the government should move toward a complete and consistent monopoly price. Finally, in the moral and psychological realm, opponents relied on the ever-potent argument by precedent, noting that T'ai-tsu, as an imperial favor, had specifically exempted Ho-pei from the salt monopoly. In answer, advocates argued that this exemption had been a mistake. Furthermore, it was essential for the successful defense of China that she present a more dynamic image to the barbarians. Extension and tightening of the monopoly system would demonstrate the vigor of the imperial government.

In this case, though across-the-board tightening of the monopolies was being practiced on every side, opponents of the extension won and Ho-pei salt continued to be sold freely.

Wine

If this discussion has given primacy to the salt monopoly, it is not because of any clear predominance that revenue from salt enjoyed among monopoly receipts during the Sung. At least during the first century of the dynasty, revenue from the wine monopoly was significantly greater.⁷⁹ According to the sources, the 4,280,000-plus strings of wine revenue collected in the Ching-te era (1004–7) surpassed by almost a quarter the 3,550,000-plus strings from salt and fell only a little short of the 4.5 million-plus strings collected in commercial taxes. By 1045, the contrast between wine and salt receipts was even more striking: wine – over 17 million strings; salt – over 7,150,000 strings.⁸⁰ (Commercial tax receipts were over 19,750,000 strings.) Total government revenue at this time appears to have been about 120 million strings, making wine receipts about one-seventh of the total.

Nevertheless, the salt monopoly serves much better than wine as a paradigm of Sung monopoly practices; monopolization of salt posed problems of the kind faced in most other monopolies, especially tea, while many of the wine monopoly problems were distinctive. Of even greater importance, it was the eleventh-century system of government–merchant co-operation to work salt profits that persisted in its general outline for another 800 years of salt monopolization, to the end of the Ch'ing. By striking contrast and despite the indispensable role of wine in the Sung fiscal administration, the wine monopoly disappeared as a source of government revenue after the Yüan (1260–1368).

⁷⁹ On the wine monopoly, see Golas, "The Sung wine monopoly."

⁸⁰ For a regional breakdown of Northern Sung wine revenues, see Sung Shao-kuang, "Sung-tai chiu-huo p'ou-hsi," in Sung Shao-kuang, *Sung-tai ching-chi lun-wen chi* (Hong Kong, 1985), pp. 11–23.

Much of the success of the Sung wine monopoly must be attributed to general improvements in administrative practices and to a clever dual system of officially and privately operated wineries. From early in the dynasty, the government monopolized wine throughout most of the empire, but it never attempted to manage directly all fermenting and sale of wine. Rather, local officials ran the more lucrative wineries, usually those in cities, under the system called *chüeh-ku*, but leased out marginal, largely rural wineries to private individuals, under the system called *mai-p'u*. As mentioned in the section on labor service, the office servicemen (*ya-ch'ien*) also played a key role in the wine monopoly before the reforms of Wang An-shih. In relatively advanced areas, where the wine trade was lucrative, they were often awarded wineries at the end of their service; with good management, the profits might equal or even surpass the contributions inevitably demanded of them while on service. In other areas, office servicemen were ordered to manage official wineries as all or a part of their service obligation. These wineries often represented one of the major burdens of the office servicemen, since they bore the responsibility for seeing that the quotas of the wineries were met.

These quotas, assigned to wineries run either by officials or by private contractors, represented the amount a winery was expected to produce each year in revenue for the central government. To make it possible for the wineries to meet their quotas, the government established around population centers prohibition zones (*chin-ti*) in which all unauthorized fermenting and sale of wine was forbidden. The prohibition zone for K'ai-feng was fifty *li* (about fifteen miles) from its walls in every direction. Prefectural cities had twenty-*li* prohibition zones; those for county seats and market towns (*chen*) were ten *li*. A detailed schedule of punishments, varying according to the nature of the offense and the amount of wine or ferments involved, was applied to the prohibition areas.

In Wang's reforms, the post of office serviceman was abolished along with other labor services. At the same time, the reformers placed a new emphasis on the *mai-p'u* sector of the monopoly as a source of revenue for a number of the reforms, including the Granaries Policy for paying salaries to clerks and the increase in prefectural office expense cash (*kung-shih ch'ien*). Tied to the increases in office expense cash were more liberal authorizations of office expense wine (*kung-shih chiu*), for whose fermentation official funds and grain could be used; this more than likely reflects the considerably more important role that partying and banqueting were coming to occupy in the officials' lifestyle. The immediate result of the increases in office expense wine seems to have been a sharp increase in fermenting by the office expense treasuries (*kung-shih k'u*), to the point where sale of their surpluses began to hurt wine monopoly receipts.

During their short return to power, the conservatives here, as elsewhere, attempted to reverse Wang's policies: authorizations of office expense cash and wine were reduced and officials took over many of the lucrative *mai-p'u* wineries. After 1094, the reform policies were formally reimplemented but the government found its receipts from wine increasingly threatened by surreptitious fermenting and sales by local officials. The problem was compounded when mobilization for war gave local military officials an opportunity to divert wine revenues.

As the government's position stabilized early in the Southern Sung, it mounted a strong effort to bring wineries back under its control. Step by step, unauthorized wineries were abolished or incorporated into the monopoly. Even the military wineries posed less of a problem than might have been expected; like the illegal activities of local officials, most of the military incursions seem to have been mainly small and clandestine, avoiding any direct challenge to the authority of the central government. By the end of the reign of Kao-tsung, the monopoly was under reasonably effective control and still basically consisted of two groups of wineries: those run by officials and those leased out to private individuals. Some areas, however, were beginning to turn away from the monopolizing of wine, with all its administrative complications, and were collecting instead a wine tax to cover the existing quota. In exchange, people were allowed to ferment wine freely. Chu Hsi (1130-1200), emphasizing the abuses of the existing system, was among the strong advocates of this policy. On the other hand, there were those who stressed the obvious danger of such a policy; once the wine obligation became just another miscellaneous tax, its original purpose of covering all wine obligations would sooner or later be forgotten, opening the way to new wine levies in the future. It is still unclear how much headway this trend made during the closing century of the Sung.

Tea and alum

Tea drinking became firmly established in China during the T'ang.⁸¹ By the end of the eighth century, it was customary not only in south China but also in the north and, at the end of the dynasty, tea production was important in most of the areas that would dominate production down to the present. (The major exception was modern Kwangtung, which did not become a major center until the Southern Sung.) With the growth of the tea trade, both the central government and the increasingly powerful provincial authorities began

⁸¹ On the very gradual spread of tea production and tea drinking in China, see Smith, *Taxing heaven's storehouse*, pp. 51-5.

in the late eighth century a variety of experiments to draw revenue from tea. Tea was never more than a very minor item of revenue in the T'ang, however.⁸²

In the Sung, a series of improvements in growing and processing techniques gave great impetus to the tea trade. In addition, two important new markets opened up: tea-drinking became popular among the peoples on China's northern borders and a taste for Chinese tea spread among the countries of South and Southeast Asia. Using policies similar to those of the salt monopoly, the government either monopolized or heavily taxed the tea trade. It also attempted to exclude private merchants from the southern ocean trade in tea. Though revenues from tea were not negligible, they ordinarily were far below the revenue from wine or salt: a figure of almost 6 million strings is given for 1004 and more than 4 million strings were supposedly realized in the year 1111, but mostly the totals fall between 1 million and 3 million strings. Tea was probably more important as an incentive to persuade merchants to ship supplies to the northern frontiers, as an item that could be exchanged with the Tibetans for horses and as a club to threaten the Liao and Chin, whose only source of tea was Sung China.

Alum (*fan*) was important in papermaking, leather processing, medicines, and water purification. Especially since the late T'ang, as colored cloths came to be used more widely, alum also came into wide use as a mordant in dying. Ordinarily, production was in the hands of private individuals (*huo-hu*, lit. "caldron households"), to many of whom the government lent capital. It then bought up the entire supply remaining after a portion had been paid in taxes and either sold the alum itself or, increasingly, allowed private merchants to sell it, often in exchange for provisions delivered to the frontier. In this way, the sale of alum came to be monopolized by a small group of wealthy merchants.⁸³ One of the major difficulties faced by the government in this monopoly was the relatively easy availability of alum; it often found itself with more alum on hand than the market required.

Mining and metals

Because of the great variety of products mined and the considerable variation in the size, type, and profitability of mining operations, government policies to control and draw revenue from mining equalled or even surpassed in

⁸² For the tea monopoly, see Saeki Tomi, *Sōdai chabō kenkyū shiryō* (Kyōto, 1941); the several articles collected in Saeki Tomi, *Chūgoku shi kenkyū*, 3 vols. (Kyōto, 1969–77); and the works included in the bibliography of Smith, *Taxing heaven's storehouse*.

⁸³ Saeki Tomi, "Sōdai ni okeru myōban no senbai seido," *Tōa jinbun gakubō* 1 No. 4 (1942), pp. 258–85; collected in Saeki, *Chūgoku shi kenkyū*, Volume 1, pp. 421–57.

complexity policies enacted for the other monopolies.⁸⁴ The government was also greatly concerned to appropriate considerable amounts of the production, especially of iron and copper, to meet its own needs.⁸⁵ At the same time, officials had to consider the possibly detrimental effects on agricultural production if mining became too attractive and lured farmers from their fields, as well as potential disruption of law and order by bands of professional miners whose mobility and lack of roots made them less susceptible to control by the state.

In the early Sung, excluding large mines producing especially copper (*t'ung*) and iron (*kang*) needed for currency and weapons, direct government operation of mines seems to have been minimal. For the most part, the government preferred simply to collect taxes, normally in kind, on the production of the mines leased out to private entrepreneurs through an offer-for-bid process (*ch'eng-mai* or *mai-p'u*) similar to that used in the wine monopoly. As in other areas, the relatively low taxes and flexible enforcement tended to disappear in the course of the eleventh century as government revenue needs increased.

The reform period of Wang An-shih brought significant changes in what had developed into counterproductive policies that stressed enforcement of tax obligations. Instead of seeking ever-greater revenues from existing mines, the government displayed an unprecedented vigor in promoting the opening up of new mines, often involving itself directly. An early measure of the reform period, for example, was an across-the-board elimination of quotas (*sui-k'o*) on mines that were no longer productive.⁸⁶ Government imposts on private mines were regularized and the previous trend toward growing official interference in mining was reversed. Even the phasing out of labor service in all likelihood was a stimulus to higher mining production, whether it encouraged officials to make government mines available to private entrepreneurs or required them to hire miners at market wages.

After what seems to have been a dramatic surge in mining production as a result of the reform policies, the final decades of the Northern Sung witnessed a steep decline. Among many reasons may have been that the very success of the reform policies exhausted many mines or at least their more exploitable ores. The officials of the Southern Sung thus found themselves engaged in a

⁸⁴ I have dealt in some detail with government policies in this area in Golas, "Mining policies of the Sung government." For the broader background of mining in China and especially for the geographical distribution of mining areas, see Peter J. Golas, *Mining*, Part 13 of *Chemistry and chemical technology*, Volume 5 of *Science and civilisation in China*, ed. Joseph Needham (Cambridge, 1999).

⁸⁵ A striking example: in 1080, the government minted almost 4 billion coins, which would have required over 9,900 tons of copper, more than 3,800 tons of lead and almost 1,300 tons of tin; Golas, "Mining policies of the Sung government," p. 414.

⁸⁶ For a discussion of quotas as a crucial tool of the Sung fiscal administration even in cases where they were extremely difficult to implement, see Golas, "Mining policies of the Sung government," pp. 415-17.

kind of holding action where considerable efforts were made to revive mining production, especially by encouraging the opening of new mines, but usually with disappointing results.⁸⁷

Despite the mixed record in the Southern Sung, mining seems to be one area where government interventions did much to promote production. Even in the Southern Sung, mining production could have sunk still lower were it not for the operating expenses advanced by the government.⁸⁸ As in the case of agriculture, the government also promoted the use of better and even quite new technology in order to stimulate greater production. A particularly remarkable example was its encouragement of the wet extraction method of precipitating metallic copper from mine waters. It was a technique still very much experimental in the mid-eleventh century but one which provided one-quarter of all government-registered copper production by 1160. It is highly unlikely that this sector would have developed as dramatically as it did without strong government support and participation.⁸⁹

DISBURSEMENTS

Imperial revenues and treasuries

Not all revenues that made their way from the circuits and prefectures to the capital became available for government expenditures.⁹⁰ As early as the Han, a clear distinction had regularly been made between revenues for the use of the government and those for the emperor's personal use. This distinction seems to have died out during the Five Dynasties, but it was quickly resurrected by T'ai-tsu. In 965, imperial control had been established over south central

⁸⁷ See the handy tables comparing surviving numerical data on government mining receipts in the T'ang and Sung in Wang, *Liang Sung ts'ai-cheng shih*, Volume 2, pp. 724–8; and the discussion of them in Volume 1, pp. 307–10. Compare also Robert M. Hartwell, "Markets, technology, and the structure of enterprise in the development of the eleventh-century Chinese iron and steel industry," *Journal of Economic History* 26 No. 1 (1966), pp. 29–58, 29–34.

⁸⁸ Of course, these loans could produce the considerable risks associated with over-leveraged investments anywhere, risks that were all the greater when dealing with officials in imperial China.

⁸⁹ Peter J. Golas, "A copper production breakthrough in the Song: The copper precipitation process," *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies* 25 (1995), pp. 153–68.

⁹⁰ On imperial receipts and expenditures, see Hartwell, "Imperial treasuries"; Umehara Kaoru, "Sōdai no naizō to sazō," *Tōbō gakubō* 42 (1971), pp. 127–75; and Gong, "Imperial policy and national finance." The former contains a wealth of information not only on the treasuries but also on a host of related topics, including imperial receipts and expenditures, foreign trade and customs, foreign and domestic tribute, etc. Especially important are the detailed figures on regular government receipts and expenditures up to 1059, which, however, are difficult to use because all the original data is converted into a silver-kilo standard devised by Hartwell (see pp. 20, 78–9; and Golas, "The Sung economy: How big?", pp. 90–4, 92 n. 4) without his providing the original figures that serve for the conversions. The Umehara article is especially valuable for its reproduction of many of the relevant texts from the Chinese sources.

China and Szechwan, and government finances were registering a healthy surplus. Nevertheless, the Sung founder had his eye to future military needs and decided against lightening taxes. Instead, he ordered that an imperial reserve treasury (*feng-chuang k'u*) be established and that all surplus revenues be transferred to it at the end of each year.

The imperial reserve treasury was the first of a series of palace treasuries established during the Sung. There were more than 130 of them by the end of the tenth century and, after consolidations, still more than fifty-two in 1078. These treasuries handled the revenues that made up the emperor's privy purse (*nei-ts'ang*). Supervised by eunuchs, their funds lay beyond control or check by the regular financial officials of the government, who were usually unaware how much revenue the emperor had on hand. By 1069, according to Hartwell, "the emperor supervised the receipt and expenditure of nearly 23 percent of total government income."⁹¹

The emperors' private funds were used first for the upkeep of the palace establishment, the imperial clan (*tsung-shih*), and the imperial tombs.⁹² The emperors also made personal relief grants to victims of flood, drought, and plague. The early emperors and Shen-tsung saved part of their revenues for planned military campaigns. Finally, there were the costs of the imperial sacrifices to Heaven and Earth (partly paid by the emperor and partly by the government), which were carried out ordinarily every three years. These sacrifices played an important role in the Chinese polity. They were, of course, an impressive display of imperial splendor. But the actual expense of putting on the sacrifices was a relatively small part of their total cost. The greater part went on the imperial gifts distributed on these occasions to the underpaid officials and to the armies. Understandably, no emperor would care to suggest with inadequate gifts that he undervalued the services of his officials and soldiers, but here, as in other areas, it was the third Sung emperor, Chen-tsung, who set the precedent of truly lavish spending with his *feng-shan* sacrifices. Where the first Sung emperors had been content to dispense about 1.5 million strings for a single sacrifice, this theoretically triennial expenditure had risen to between 8 million and 13 million strings in the latter part of the eleventh century.

⁹¹ Hartwell, "Imperial treasuries," p. 60. Discounting the exactitude suggested by "almost 23%", more or less one-quarter of all revenues seems to be the best estimate we can make given the data available for what the emperor personally received in the 1060s and 1070s. Actually, Hartwell himself points out in an earlier paper that that was probably considerably higher than the average for the Sung, which may have been around 10 percent; Hartwell, "Government finance and the regional economies of China," p. 38.

⁹² For estimates of privy purse receipts and expenditures, broken down into various categories, see Hartwell, "Imperial treasuries," Tables 1-4.

Only to a certain extent, however, could the distinction between the emperor's and the government's funds be kept clear. Even in the reigns of T'ai-tsu and T'ai-tsung, loans had often been made from the privy purse to cover government deficits. By the early eleventh century, these loans totaled 60 million units, or more than twice the government's revenues for an entire year.⁹³ Certain loans, such as 300,000 strings for the armies in Shan-hsi, had become a regular yearly practice. Since there was a provision that loans not repaid within three years were to be cancelled, these "loans" in effect represented imperial grants. As the government's finances slowly deteriorated, imperial grants became increasingly indispensable. In the sixty-five years from 1003 to 1067, imperial transfers of funds for regular government expenses, especially military needs, are recorded for at least forty-three of those years, and that does not include the regular yearly withdrawal cash (*nien-t'ui ch'ien*) of 600,000 strings transferred to the Left Storehouse (*Tso-ts'ang k'u*) of the Finance Commission every spring from 1018 to 1067.

As many imperial revenues became effectively earmarked for central-government use, the emperors began to resort to the creation of new treasuries to store revenue exclusively for their personal use. This seems to have been at least part of the motivation behind the Yüan-feng Treasury, established in 1081 to collect some of the abundant receipts flowing in as a result of the New Policies. During the reign of Hui-tsung, new imperial treasuries were being established even as the government's financial situation became critical.⁹⁴

In the Southern Sung, revenues for the emperor's private treasury continued to come partly from regular government receipts and partly from a wide variety of other sources: receipts from the sale of government lands, fees from government tenants, offerings to the emperor of silver and silk, revenues from mines, fees charged by the government for registering a wide variety of commercial transactions, and income realized from the increasing sale of privileges and tax exemptions in the form of official ranks and ordination certificates. In 1190, reflecting the prosperity enjoyed both by the government and by the empire during the reign of Hsiao-tsung, the imperial reserve treasuries held in gold and silver the equivalent of more than 30 million strings of cash or something over one-third of the central government's yearly income. In addition, another 5 or 6 million strings were held in cash or paper currency (*chiao-tzu*).

⁹³ Wang, "Sung-tai ts'ai-cheng sui ch'u," p. 151.

⁹⁴ Hui-tsung's Ta-kuan Treasury (named after the year era 1107–10) was said to contain, among other things, 3,000 Tuan-hsi ink-stones, the best in the empire, and 100,000 *chin* of ink.

The needs of local government

The sometimes latent, sometimes not-so-latent conflict between the central government and local officials for local revenues has surfaced frequently in the preceding pages. The revenues available to prefectural and county officials for the costs of local administration deserve to be considered in some detail because most of the standard sources on Sung financial administration, concerned mainly with the needs and demands of the central government, rarely offer a comprehensive picture of how prefectural and county offices met their expenses. The local gazetteers (*fang-chih*) from the Southern Sung contain abundant materials on local finance, but these have been exploited only piecemeal.

Until well into the first quarter of the eleventh century, the efforts of the central government to exercise firm control over local expenditures had both economic and political motivations. There was certainly a strong desire to prevent wasteful expenditures.⁹⁵ Probably even more importantly, the court was determined to bring local government under its firm control – hence orders such as the one insisting that the disposal by local authorities of so much as one cash must be specifically authorized. In practice, enforcement of such strict controls at this time was tempered by the prosperous state of the central government's finances.

Prefectures and counties drew their revenues from a very wide variety of sources. To begin with, they were permitted to retain for their own use a percentage of what they nominally collected for the central government. This "broken part" (*p'o-fen*) was regularly 10 to 20 percent of the total and must have accounted for a substantial part of prefectural revenues until the practice was abolished in the Southern Sung. The central government also authorized, as we have seen, yearly office expense cash (*kung-shih ch'ien*) and, later, office expense wine (*kung-shih chiu*), though the amounts were very small in the early Northern Sung. Local organs also levied surcharges on a number of revenues collected for the central government. Arbitrary levies unconnected with tax collections were also used, as when merchants were ordered to provide goods needed by local officials. In some cases, I.O.U.s might be given, but these became worthless the moment the issuing official was transferred.

Grains and funds in price-regulating and other granaries also served as an important source of revenue. These stores might be drawn on directly to meet sudden expenditures or to make up deficits in the quotas of revenue to be forwarded to the central government. Indirectly, as we have seen in the Green Sprouts Policy, they could serve as capital for official loans; at least some of the

⁹⁵ Ma Tuan-lin, *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* (Taipei, 1964) 23, p. 228b.

interest earned might be used for prefectural expenses. Loans even by military officials were sufficiently common to have a special designation (*bui-i*). The central government frowned on these practices, but they continued nonetheless. There were also a number of very minor sources of revenue left by the central government for prefectural and county needs: legal fines and confiscations, rents from government-owned property, profits from the sale of vinegar, and charges for various kinds of official paperwork.⁹⁶ Finally, as in the T'ang, labor service was an important resource for prefectures and counties in the early Sung.

The tightening financial squeeze in the eleventh century that led the central government to increase its demands on the prefectures did not leave the latter without recourse – officials in the central government could hardly know local conditions and revenue potential as well as did officials on the scene. Moreover, as we have seen in the case of commercial tax quotas, excessive quotas were likely to be met by prefectural remonstrations that they could not be met. Nevertheless, the problems at many prefectures and counties had grown very serious by the 1060s, leading Wang An-shih to attempt to put the costs of local government on a sounder and more open basis. Office expense cash was increased considerably and the labor service exemption cash, amounting to far more than was needed to hire laborers, provided an ample, secure fund to be drawn on for local needs. Wang's efforts, however, were ultimately compromised not only by the tendency of the central government always to exact more revenues, but also by the change in the balance between the central authority and local administration that began toward the end of the Northern Sung. The taxes surrounding the sale of real property throw fascinating light on the kinds of difficulty the central government met in its financial relations with the prefectures during the Southern Sung.⁹⁷

From the early years of the dynasty, the government required that all sales or mortgages of real property be registered with the officials and a tax be paid on the transactions. This broker's-and-deeds tax (*ya ch'i shui-ch'ien*) was an obligation on the buyer or mortgagee. Until 1060, the amount of the tax varied in different localities and whatever was collected was used for local needs. In that year, the rate for the empire was standardized at forty cash per one thousand cash valuation, and it is quite likely that the central government began at this time to take for itself a part of the receipts. With the implementation of pacification cash in 1122, the rate was raised to sixty per thousand, with the twenty-cash increment presumably earmarked for the pacification cash account. The increase was rescinded in 1126 but

⁹⁶ For more examples, see Ma, *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* 23, p. 228c.

⁹⁷ See Wada Sei, *Sō shi shokka shi yakuchū* (Tōkyō, 1960), Volume 1, pp. 518–20 n. 543.

reimplemented shortly after with the second implementation of pacification cash. In 1135, along with the beginning of finance supervision cash, the rate was again raised, to one hundred per thousand. A search fee (*k'an-bo ch'ien*) of ten per thousand was also added at this time. While the entire search fee was to go into the finance supervision cash fund, the broker's tax was divided into three parts: 35 percent for pacification cash; 32.5 percent for finance supervision cash; 32.5 percent for prefectural expenses.

By the mid-1160s, the search cash had been raised to thirteen per thousand and a surtax of fifty-six per thousand (*t'ou-tzu ch'ien*) was also being collected on real-estate transactions. A person buying real property thus had to pay a minimum of 169 cash in taxes per one thousand cash valuation, and this did not include the cost of the original permission to make the transaction (*ch'ing-mai ch'i-chih*) or bribes for the clerks. It is not surprising that people increasingly neglected to register real-estate transactions, resorting instead to private deeds without official certification (*pai-ch'i*).

The central government realized what was happening but could do nothing except try to persuade the local officials to make a serious effort to enforce the tax. Its attempts at persuasion, however, ran head-on into a lethargy among local officials that had arisen in no small part because of the ever-smaller proportion of such revenues allowed for local use. The approximately 30 percent that the prefectures received from the broker's tax was apparently not sufficient to encourage effective enforcement. The central government was therefore forced to offer two carrots. To encourage the people to register past, illegal real-estate transactions, it declared that no penalties would be charged those who responded. Then, to elicit the co-operation of the prefectures, it allowed them to keep 50 or even 70 percent of these extended-deadline (*fang-hsien*) payments. The results were predictable. In 1224, for example, Ch'ing-yüan fu (Ming-chou) collected only 5,426 strings of broker's tax in the regular-deadline category; its share of which was 723 strings. In the extended-deadline category, on the other hand, it collected 72,004 strings, of which its share was 34,383 strings.

Provisioning and paying the military

While government receipts in cash and precious metals were rising remarkably in the early Sung, the grain collected as taxes remained at approximately the same level as in the T'ang.⁹⁸ In many ways, this was a happy development for the government; compared with grain, transportation, storage, and accounting

⁹⁸ In part, this was because increasing amounts of even the land taxes were being paid in money in place of grain.

for cash and precious metals was much easier. On the negative side, however, the government was now collecting far too little tax grain to meet the salaries of its officials (a large part of which was in grain) and, more importantly, to feed its soldiers. It thus faced the choice of either raising grain taxes or buying the grain it needed. By and large, it chose the latter. As a result, in an economy where commercialization of agriculture was proceeding very rapidly in any case, it was further accelerated by the entrance of the government into the market.

The various policies of the government to purchase grain bore a bewildering variety of names, often incorporating the character “*ti*,” meaning “grain purchase.” Among the most important policies were those under which merchants were encouraged to buy grain and deliver it to the frontiers in exchange for cash or, as we have seen in the case of salt and tea, for other commodities. An example is the *Pien-ti* or Expedient Grain Purchase Policy.

During the first two decades of the dynasty, the government seems to have handled directly most of the provisioning of the armies. In 985, however, it began to invite merchants to deliver rice, millet, and fodder to the Ho-pei frontier. Officials on the spot paid the merchants with exchange vouchers (*pien-ti liang-ts'ao chiao-yin* or *chiao-ch'ao*) that had been issued by the Finance Commission. These vouchers could either be redeemed for cash at the Monopoly Tax Commission (*Chieh-huo wu*) in K'ai-feng or exchanged for tea vouchers that could in turn be redeemed at tea production centers in south China. These vouchers and similar vouchers for salt and aromatics that were added later came to be traded by merchants much like modern commodity shares. From the government's point of view, the procedure was a success, if at times an expensive one: at one point, when the system had been extended to the other frontier areas, merchants delivered some 16 million bushels of grain, or about the same amount as the yearly tax grain shipped up the Pien Canal to K'ai-feng. When necessary, the government was generous with incentive payments (*ju-chung hsü-ku*, *chia-t'ai*) above the market price of the supplies delivered: in Ho-pei alone, these extra payments totaled 5,680,000 strings of cash during the five years from 1031 to 1035.

The merchants, whose services were indispensable, could drive a hard bargain with the officials. Not so farmers. Government systems for purchasing their surplus grain, such as the harmonious grain purchase (*ho-ti*) or the equitable grain purchase (*chün-ti*), tended with depressing predictability to degenerate into yet another imposition on their meager earnings. Immediate compensation at market prices was the principle, but arbitrary prices set to favor the government as well as postponed or unpaid compensation were often the reality. Especially in the late Northern and in the Southern Sung, even the principle of compensation tended to be forgotten as grain-purchase policies

became simply another kind of miscellaneous tax. The same perversion of original intent was typical of government policies for the purchase of silk (*ho-mai*), the barter of surplus commodities for grain (*po-ti*), and the lending of cash to farmers in the spring against payment in silk cloth later in the year (*yü-mai*).

Under the Tso-ts'ang (Left Storehouse) policy, first implemented in the Northern Sung, the government also contrived to pay soldiers with one hand while taking the grain back from them with the other. Since soldiers often received as salary more grain than they required for their personal needs, the government decided to buy up this surplus grain, giving the soldiers as much or more than they were receiving when they sold their surplus to merchants. Even at these prices, so it was calculated, the government would acquire advantageously a part of the grain needed for future salary payments. Inevitably, government prices often failed to keep pace with market prices, and officials resorted to forcing the soldiers to sell a fixed amount of grain each year at arbitrarily low prices. Frequent orders from the central government in both the Northern and the Southern Sung were unable to halt this abuse.

The pao-chia militia system

Whatever method the government used for shipping supplies to the armies on the frontier, the costs were enormous. Moreover, in the course of the eleventh century, it became increasingly clear that the investment was bringing a poor return; the number of soldiers kept rising while their quality declined. The historically minded Sung officials who considered this problem were consequently attracted to military systems of earlier dynasties that had relied on militia, or farmer-soldiers, who at least in theory were able to support themselves. Among these officials was Wang An-shih, who considered his *pao-chia* militia plan one of the highest-priority measures of the entire reform program. By his rather optimistic estimate, a complete militia system would cost only 10 to 20 percent as much as the existing professional army. Under the *pao-chia* system, farmers were to be organized into *pao* or mutual-responsibility groups of at first ten, and later five, households. *Pao* were grouped by fives into big *pao* (*ta-pao*), which were in turn grouped by tens into joint *pao* (*tu-pao*). Initiated in the K'ai-feng area, the *pao-chia* system originally stressed the maintenance of local order. Soon some military training was added and the system was extended to the whole empire, including the border regions. A transition from professional soldiers to militiamen was to be accomplished gradually by not filling vacancies that occurred in the imperial armies (*chin-chün*). The resulting remitted imperial army vacancy funds (*feng-chuang chin-chün ch'üeh-o ch'ien*) were to be used to support and reward militiamen.

At first sight, this reform appears to be a foredoomed attempt to restore the past, with too little concern for current realities. Indeed, it is quite possible that Wang cared little about the real military effectiveness of the militiamen just so long as he could use their numbers as a pretext for cutting the number and cost of professional soldiers. Yet, even militarily, the system was not necessarily unrealistic, especially for defensive actions. Local militiamen such as the “righteous braves” (*i-yung*) had previously acquitted themselves well in battle. Between the T’ang and the Sung, there were no changes in the style of warfare that of themselves rendered reliance on a farmer–soldier militia obsolete. Defense of the border was not a permanent, Maginot Line-type of holding operation. Rather, armies were needed only at certain times and at certain points when an invading force appeared. A large militia, provided it was well trained and well led, was a sensible approach to the problem, and financially far preferable to a standing, usually idle, professional force. The respectable performance by public and private militiamen both in the Northern and the Southern Sung proved this over and over again.⁹⁹

The *pao-chia* system was not canceled by the conservatives, probably because of its indisputable success in reducing military expenditure. Instead, while the system took firm root in the countryside as a means of rural administration, the military effectiveness of the militia seems to have declined for want of forceful leadership. Finally, the disruption accompanying the loss of north China, and especially the rise of private armies in the early Southern Sung, brought to an end the experiment with an empire-wide militia.

Transport and communications

One of T’ai-tsu’s prerogatives as the founder of a new dynasty was the selection of a capital. It was not an easy decision. Everything suggested a continuing threat from the northern barbarians; as a military man, T’ai-tsu therefore leaned toward the strategically well-placed T’ang capitals Loyang (the eastern capital) or Ch’ang-an (the western capital). He was also personally fond of Loyang, his birthplace. On the other hand, any northern capital – and none other could be contemplated – would necessarily depend heavily on grain and other taxes from the southeast, the richest region of the still-to-be-unified empire. In this perspective, Ch’ang-an and Loyang posed serious overland transport problems and were consequently far less attractive than K’ai-feng.

⁹⁹ From the point of view of the individual farmer, on the other hand, the requirement that he spend a certain amount of time each year in military training may have represented a much greater burden in the Sung than in the T’ang: the increase in double-cropping and rural handicrafts reduced significantly the periods when farmers were forced to be idle and unproductive.

K'ai-feng was not only located at the head of the major water route for goods coming from the south, the Pien Canal, but was also convenient as a transshipment point for supplies to the armies on the northern frontiers. Economic considerations proved stronger than personal and strategic factors. After some wavering, T'ai-tsu chose K'ai-feng.¹⁰⁰

Few government operations in the Northern Sung display better than the Pien Canal the effectiveness of the administration at its best. The figures alone tell much of the story. Although the richest rice area of the southeast, the kingdom of Wu-yüeh (902-78), did not capitulate until 978, by 981 the yearly quota of grain coming up the Pien was 3.5 million *shih* (c. 10 million bushels), a figure already approaching the maximum shipped during the T'ang. By 995, this quota had risen to 5.8 million *shih* and it remained about 6 million *shih* yearly throughout the eleventh century, with as much as 8 million *shih* actually being shipped. Almost as remarkable is the amount of grain that actually reached its destination: on average, only about 3 percent was lost en route, a figure that compares well with pilferage and loss rates of government transport operations in any dynasty.

Without constant maintenance, however, this lifeline could easily turn into a bottleneck. The water for the Pien Canal came from the Yellow River (Huang-ho), and thus contained a high percentage of silt. (The Sung cliché was: six parts water, four parts silt.) Constant dredging was necessary to keep the canal navigable. When the Chin, for example, neglected this maintenance after their conquest of the north, the canal quickly silted up and, a short time later, was being used as farmland. The government also had to carry on a major shipbuilding operation to maintain the convoys (*pien-kang*) plying the canal; in the early eleventh century, it was building some three thousand grain barges yearly.¹⁰¹

A serious problem never solved was the yearly closing of the canal for about six months in the winter and spring because of a lack of water in the Yellow River. In 1079, a feeder canal was opened to divert water from the Lo River (Lo shui) during this season and thus keep the canal open year-round. Because the supply of water in the Lo proved inadequate, however, the results were disappointing and this canal was closed in 1090.

Obtaining a steady, maximum flow of grain was also made difficult by the irregular arrival of tax shipments from the south and from Szechwan. (Because there was no through water route from Szechwan to K'ai-feng, most taxes from

¹⁰⁰ In the reign of Chen-tsung, the Loyang city fathers were still trying to have the capital transferred to their city.

¹⁰¹ From 1016 onward, canal convoys were made up of thirty barges, each barge carrying on the average three or four hundred *shih* of grain. Separate, floating kitchens did all of the cooking for the crews in order to prevent pilferage and fire. The ships could make three or four round trips per year.

the west were first sent down the Yangtze and then up the Pien Canal.) To meet this problem, as well as the further difficulty that the Pien Canal was too shallow to handle the large, deep-draft boats from the Yangtze, the government implemented a transshipment system (*chuan-pan fa*), supervised by supply commissioners (*fa-yün shih*). Four transshipment granaries (*chuan-pan ts'ang*) located at Yang-chou, Ch'u-chou, Chen-chou, and Ssu-chou collected all tax and tribute from the south and west and sent it up the canal as barges became available. The supply commissioners also kept grain reserves that could be substituted for tax shipments that did not arrive on time, thus assuring a constant flow of grain during the months the canal was open. Tax-boats returning from the transshipment granaries were used to distribute monopoly salt from the Huai-nan coast.

In the early twelfth century, after placing all salt distribution for south China in the hands of private merchants (*ch'ao-yen fa*, *t'ung-shang fa*), the court further decided to require the southern circuits to ship their taxes directly to the capital (*chih-ta fa*). With responsibility for the Pien Canal portion of the trip now transferred to the circuits, the government felt free to use for other purposes the reserves previously maintained by the supply commissioners. The results of this incredibly shortsighted policy showed up almost immediately. Within two years, the amount of grain arriving at the capital yearly had declined by more than 1.3 million *shih*, or almost 25 percent. Later, the transport of grain was further hindered by flower-and-rock convoys (*hua-shih kang*) of Emperor Hui-tsung that brought to the capital great quantities of supplies and natural curiosities for the use of the insatiable emperor and his court.

Apart from the Pien Canal, K'ai-feng also relied on other rivers, the Yellow River, the Kuang-chi and the Hui-min, all of which were navigable and were used to bring in food supplies. The city was also the hub of an extensive road system extending out in all directions. These roads were indispensable where river transportation was not available or when the rivers became unnavigable. For example, the last three hundred *li* (a hundred miles) of the route from the capital to Ch'üan-chou, rapidly replacing Kuang-chou (Canton) as the chief port for the southern-seas trade, were overland. In the same way, much of the route to Ch'in-chou, the center for trade on the northwestern border, was by land. Many of the supplies for the armies on the northern borders also went by land, helping to swell the military budget.

To handle its communication and transport needs along routes other than the Pien Canal, the government maintained throughout the empire a courier-transport system (*yu-ch'uan*, *yu-ti*, *i-ch'uan*, *i-ti*).¹⁰² During the Northern

¹⁰² Peter J. Golas, "The courier-transport system of the Northern Sung," *Papers on China* (Harvard University) 20 (1966), pp. 1-22.

Sung, this system consisted primarily of three kinds of relay: the foot relay (*pu-ti*), the mounted relay (*ma-ti*), and the running relay (*chi chiao-ti*). Though all three relays existed mainly to transmit documents, the mounted relay often provided horses for traveling officials, and both the foot and the mounted relays transported goods. The relays were made up of stations strung out along major roads, at average intervals of eighteen to twenty *li*. The stations were manned by couriers who ordinarily traveled only between their own stations and the next station in either direction, where couriers from that station took over to the following station, and so on. For the most part, the couriers seem to have been drawn from the provincial armies; T'ai-tsu proclaimed proudly his decision to abandon the T'ang practice of using men on labor service as couriers. The maintenance of both the courier-transport system and the Pien Canal accounted for a large percentage of the Northern Sung government's nonmilitary expenses. In the Southern Sung, as we have seen, the government's transportation problems eased considerably and its major concern became simply the maintenance of the courier-transport system.

Public relief

Public relief both for those affected by natural calamities and, in normal times, for those least able to care for themselves was always an important responsibility for Chinese governments, one of the ways by which they gave at least minimum credibility to the ideal of paternalistic rule by a benevolent emperor. Bad times and a feeling that officials were not trying to improve conditions or were even making them worse constituted a volatile mix that could easily flare into unrest and rebellion. Enlightened self-interest, then, must also have been a powerful motive behind the unprecedented range and number of philanthropic activities sponsored by the government or its officials in the Sung: frequent reductions, postponements and remissions of taxes, the opening of government lands, building programs to repair damage from fires and earthquakes, baby allowances to discourage infanticide, orphanages and officially run trust funds for orphans, free medicine and relief clinics for the sick, old-age homes and public cemeteries.¹⁰³ It has also been suggested that the Buddhist idea of compassion had so permeated Chinese thought that it loomed large even in the attitude of sincere Confucian officials and also encouraged private charitable activities on an unprecedented scale.¹⁰⁴ Certainly, the charitable activities of Buddhist temples could well be viewed by officials as a kind of competition that the government could hardly ignore.

¹⁰³ Wang Te-i, *Sung-tai tsai-huang te chin-chi cheng-ts'e* (Taipei, 1970).

¹⁰⁴ Hugh Scogin, "Poor relief in Northern Sung China," *Oriens Extremus* 25 No. 1 (1978), pp. 37-9.

Moreover, such activities were now far more feasible than in earlier periods; the greater surpluses produced by the flourishing Sung economy stimulated both public and private philanthropy. Private efforts deserve special attention, given the excessive compartmentalizing in many discussions of government relief. The efforts of the government were often meant to supplement private activities, rather than vice versa. Until we know a great deal more about the scope and effectiveness of private philanthropy in the Sung, there is no way to estimate the need for the government's role and statements about how well the government met that need must remain highly subjective.¹⁰⁵

Of all government relief activities, those designed to deal with famine were the most crucial. Agricultural societies, even when relatively prosperous, inevitably have large numbers of people living near the subsistence level. Famine is therefore an ever-present threat. The problem is compounded by slow and erratic transport systems that impede redistribution of goods from areas of plenty to areas of shortage. Thus, despite limited surpluses, these societies must maintain substantial reserves of basic necessities if they are to avoid periodic starvation of large numbers of their people. In the Sung, famine relief posed a problem of unprecedented magnitude. Famine tends to hit cities harder than the countryside, and urbanization was one of the major developments of the period. The government had to contend not only with the inherent difficulty of feeding urban populations when crops failed but also with refined commercial practices, including speculation and market manipulation, that could produce artificial scarcity. As a result, efforts to stabilize prices went hand in hand with more direct relief efforts and use of the very important price-regulating ("ever-normal") granaries (*ch'ang-p'ing ts'ang*).

Up to a point, the government's price-stabilization efforts sought to protect farmers along with consumers. The first recorded Sung implementation of the price-regulating granaries, in 992, was occasioned by a bumper harvest in the area of the capital that had sent grain prices plummeting. The emperor ordered officials to buy up grain as it came into the city in order to force prices up. Despite this early example, however, efforts to raise the market price of grain seem to have been a minor part of the government's overall price-stabilization and relief activities. Harvests so good as to cause major price dislocations must have been rare and officials certainly had neither information nor expertise enough to attempt, by means of official grain sales, to effect minor adjustments

¹⁰⁵ To complicate the question further, increasing attention has now begun to be paid to the efforts of many officials, especially in the Southern Sung, to "privatize" relief activities previously handled by the government. Smith, "State power and economic activism," p. 122; Robert P. Hymes, "Moral duty and self-regulating process in Southern Sung views of famine relief," in *Ordering the world: Approaches to state and society in Sung dynasty China*, ed. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 280–309.

in market prices. Vague instructions from the central government on how to proceed were of little use in practice. Furthermore, as part of its effort to keep some control over local initiatives, the central government often required local officials to obtain specific authorization before initiating any price-regulating activities. This meant lengthy review procedures that inhibited not only price regulation but often famine relief as well. By the 1030s, price stabilization had come to be seen almost exclusively as holding down prices in times of scarcity.

Despite some protests, use of the granaries also focused increasingly on direct famine relief, especially to people in cities. The kinds and extent of relief varied considerably. Grain might be sold, lent, or distributed freely, depending on the extent of the crisis and the wealth of the households being aided. In the year 1100, for example, Hui-tsung adopted a proposal that envisioned sales to poor households when there was a slight scarcity; sales to middle-level households and loans to poor households when conditions were somewhat more severe; and, in a major famine, sales to richer households; loans to middle households, and, presumably, distribution of free grain to the poor. Where stores permitted and officials were diligent, a sporadic practice began to appear in the mid-eleventh century of using price-regulating-granary capital to aid farmers, even in relatively normal times, by lending them either grain to tide them over the difficult days before the harvest or funds to buy seeds and tools for planting the new crop.

During the Sung, the idea of work relief, dormant since the Han, was also revived, with workers often paid in grain from the price-regulating granaries. In at least one case, officials were ordered to draw up plans for public works, estimating the number of workers and costs, so that these projects could be implemented immediately when needed. Statesmen astute in economic matters, such as Fan Chung-yen (989–1052), even realized that government spending for public works could stimulate a sluggish economy. Such attitudes undoubtedly contributed to the large number of water conservancy projects undertaken by officials in the Sung.

Despite a variety of potential uses for grain in the price-regulating granaries, there was a strong tendency to let it simply lie idle. This created a severe problem because grain could ordinarily be stored only for a limited period before it began to rot. Old grain sold off at the end of this period was worth considerably less than the new grain needed to replace it. The system therefore required a constant infusion of new capital just for regular maintenance. In actual practice, grain was often not replaced in time and rotted in the granaries, resulting in even higher losses. It was estimated that 15 million *shih* or something like 40 million bushels were in storage when Wang An-shih initiated his reform program.

Wang recognized not only that something had to be done about the costs of the price-regulating granaries but also that the answer was to be found in the enormous amounts of capital represented by the stored grain. He therefore extended and systematized in his Green Sprouts or Farming Loans Policy the practice of making loans to farmers from the grain and funds in the granaries. Under the direction of the Court of Agricultural Supervision and officials in charge of price regulation (*t'i-chu ch'ang-p'ing kuan*) in each circuit, grain in storage was to be divided into two parts, with half to be maintained for relief purposes. For easier handling, the remaining half was to be converted as far as possible into cash. This amount would then regularly be made available to farmers as loans bearing a maximum interest of 20 percent a year (far less than would have had to be paid on similar loans from private sources). The amount that could be borrowed was often determined by the household rank of the borrower. Repayment could be made either in grain (at rather low conversion rates, such as the lowest price for grain in the preceding ten years), or in cash.

Wang took great satisfaction from the fact that this formerly inert capital was now being used not only to help the people through difficult times but also to promote agricultural development and to bring in revenue for the government. The revenue results were impressive: 3 million strings in 1074, 2 million strings in 1080, 3 million strings in 1083. On the other hand, his opponents stressed the abuses that undoubtedly occurred in some areas, including forcing people to accept loans and charging more than the stipulated interest.¹⁰⁶

The price-regulating granaries and the Farming Loans Policy followed the fortunes of the reformers and conservatives to the end of the Northern Sung. The conservatives abolished the loans but retained the price-regulating granaries while the reformers restored Wang's system. The effects of these changes, including the shifting of circuit-level control over the granaries back and forth between officials in charge of price regulation and judicial commissioners, have not yet been carefully studied. In the Southern Sung, price-regulating granaries continued to exist in theory as a relief system, but their stores were often used for emergency prefectural expenditures. Effective relief was more often carried out by rural initiative, especially under the new system of village granaries (*she-ts'ang*) whose grain was less likely to be diverted to non-relief purposes.

¹⁰⁶ For the attacks of the opposition, see Smith, "State power and economic activism," pp. 112–19. Smith sums up by noting, "So politicized was the green sprouts debate that there is simply too much rhetoric and too little concrete information in surviving records for us to evaluate the overall impact of the policy with any confidence."

THE MONETARY SYSTEM

Looked at from the perspective of modern economics, the chief monetary problem faced by the Sung government was the need for massive increases of currency or currency substitutes to fuel an expanding economy. Any serious and sustained lack of money threatened not only to depress commerce but also to damage the government's fiscal position. Commercial taxes, of course, would have been the most direct victim. Even more important from the point of view of the government's financial health, the salt, wine, or tea monopolies could hardly have generated such large revenues without the ready availability of currency that produced a broad market of consumers able to pay for these products.¹⁰⁷ Although contemporaries by no means understood all the ramifications of the unprecedented economic growth, the Sung government seems generally to have followed enlightened monetary policies. Above all, it generally sought to promote the circulation of goods in the markets and to maintain relatively stable prices through its control of the monetary system.¹⁰⁸ The major exception was the tendency late in the Northern Sung and again in the thirteenth century to overissue and undersupport paper currency.

The main currency in the early Sung – and it would remain important throughout the dynasty – was a round bronze coin, the *ch'ien*. This coin had a square hole in the middle which made it possible, for large transactions, to thread many of them onto cords or strips of leather to form “strings” (*min*, *kuan*) really or nominally consisting of 1,000 coins. Any attempt by the government to increase the number of these coins in circulation had to contend with the limited availability of copper. In addition to promoting the use of iron coins in certain parts of the empire (especially Szechwan and along the northern and northwestern borders), the Northern Sung government made considerable efforts to increase the sources of copper: opening and expanding mines, importing copper from Korea and Japan, and encouraging the world's first industrial use of a hydrometallurgical process which reclaimed copper from copper-iron compounds.¹⁰⁹ To ensure that existing supplies of copper would be available for coinage, the government sometimes resorted to copper prohibitions (*t'ung-chin*) forbidding private individuals to buy or sell copper utensils. Finally, in a further move to make maximum use of the copper on hand,

¹⁰⁷ As it was, in the late 1070s (the period for which we have the most detailed figures), the government collected almost 60 percent of its tax revenues in cash; Hartwell, “Government finance and the regional economies of China,” p. 6.

¹⁰⁸ Hartwell argues that officials actually had a “decided preference” for gradually rising agricultural prices over the long term; Robert M. Hartwell, “Classical Chinese monetary analysis and economic policy in T'ang-Northern Sung China,” *Tōhō Gakkaï* 13 (1968), p. 74. In any case, they certainly sought to prevent or mitigate short-term volatility and, especially, deflation, which was seen to hurt producers.

¹⁰⁹ Golas, “Copper production breakthrough.”

the Sung used less copper in their coins (typically between 60 and 65 percent, but as low as 54 percent in the southern Sung¹¹⁰) than any dynasty before the Ch'ing, another period of copper scarcity, and issued coins of larger denomination that did not use more copper in proportion to their greater valuation.

These policies achieved striking results. In 997, the government minted 800,000 strings of cash, some two and a half times the highest yearly total in the T'ang. By 1085, this figure had soared to over 6 million strings, the highest level of coin production achieved in premodern China.¹¹¹ Altogether, it seems quite possible that some 150 to 200 billion coins were cast in the Northern Sung period.¹¹² Massive production, it should be pointed out, did not necessarily mean standardization; it is estimated that, in the Northern Sung alone, over 3,500 different forms of bronze and iron coin were produced.¹¹³

The government attempted to protect the existing supply of coins and to encourage their most effective use. Especially when cash was scarce, it sanctioned the use of short strings (*sheng*, *sheng-mo*), normally containing only 770 coins, by accepting them in place of full strings (*tsu*, *tsu-mo*) in tax payments.¹¹⁴ In a number of coin prohibitions (*ch'ien-chin*),¹¹⁵ it forbade the melting down or counterfeiting of coins, hoarding, or shipping coins to foreign countries. Here its success was mixed. Counterfeiters continued to risk banishment and decapitation for profits of 500 and even 1,000 percent. As an export commodity, bronze coins ranked fourth in value, just behind silk, tea, and porcelain.

In the second half of the eleventh century, the still rising production of copper, increasing imports from Korea, and the widespread use of porcelain vessels which served well in place of copper utensils led Wang An-shih in 1074 to relax the copper and coin prohibitions, including the ban on the export of coins. Even though Wang had in the previous year authorized the opening of six new mints which greatly increased the supply of coins,¹¹⁶ he may still have underestimated the increased demand for coins resulting from a number of the new policies, such as the labor service exemption tax and the Farming

¹¹⁰ Jerome Ch'en, "Sung bronzes: An economic analysis," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 28 No. 3 (1965), p. 620.

¹¹¹ Robert M. Hartwell, "The evolution of the early Northern Sung monetary system, A.D. 960–1025," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 87 No. 3 (July–September 1967), p. 283 n. 42a. That 6 billion coins includes both bronze and iron coins.

¹¹² Saeki Tomi, "Sō: Heisei," in *Ajia Rekishi Jiten* (Tōkyō, 1960), pp. 315–16.

¹¹³ Chao K'uang-hua, Hua Chüeh-ming, and Chang Hung-li, "Pei Sung t'ung-ch'ien hua-hsüeh ch'eng-fen p'ou-hsi chi ch'i chia-hsi-ch'ien te ch'u-t'an," *Tzu-jan k'o-hsüeh shih yen-chiu* 5 No. 3 (1986), p. 229.

¹¹⁴ On short strings and their relation to the question of physical monies versus monies of account, see Richard von Glahn, *Fountain of fortune: Money and monetary policy in China, 1000–1700* (Berkeley, 1996), pp. 21–2.

¹¹⁵ These are discussed in some detail in Ch'en, "Sung bronzes," pp. 616–18.

¹¹⁶ Teng, "A fresh look at Wang An-shih's reform movement," p. 557.

Loans Policy.¹¹⁷ This demand seems to have outrun the supply of new coins, with the result that the period of the new policies witnessed the severest “coin famine” (*ch'ien-huang*) of the Sung.¹¹⁸

Fortunately for the Sung economy, commercial expansion did not by any means depend exclusively on the government's ability to increase the supply of bronze coins. An important alternative was silver. Silver had come to be widely used in south China during the Five Dynasties in larger private transactions. During the Northern Sung it was also widely used north of the Yangtze. The Sung government made no attempt to coin silver or make bullion legal tender.¹¹⁹ Still, silver (as well as gold) circulated in the form of bars or ingots of standard weight and was widely accepted in payment of taxes. In 1021, the government collected approximately 884,000 ounces (*liang*); in 1075, this had risen to almost 3 million ounces; by 1120, the yearly total was more than 18 million ounces. Thus government policies not only did not hinder the use of silver as a substitute for currency but, if anything, encouraged it.

It was the least satisfactory substitute for bronze coins, however, that was to lead directly to the outstanding advance in Sung currency: the world's first paper currency. During the Five Dynasties, the states of south China (Ten Kingdoms, 902–79) practiced economic warfare against the north, devaluing their currency by circulating iron and lead coins. The goal was to promote exports by lowering prices; in this way, they attempted to siphon off bronze coins from the north. After unifying the empire, the Sung at first sought to unify its currency by relying exclusively on bronze coins. In the reign of T'ai-tsung, the policy to replace iron coins with bronze coins in southeast and south central China succeeded completely, in large part because of the relatively rich

¹¹⁷ James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien) points out that opposition to the reforms was less pronounced in south China with its relatively well-developed money economy than in the north, where that was much less the case. Liu, *Reform in Sung China*, pp. 109–10.

¹¹⁸ It is worth noting that, despite frequent shortages of copper, the government in the course of the Northern Sung used eleven tons of copper in the construction of four armillary spheres. Yabu'uchi Kiyoshi, ed., *Sō Gen jidai no kagaku gijyutsu shi* (Kyōto, 1967), p. 6. This reminds us to be on guard against the fallacy that economic considerations played as dominant a role in the determination of policy in Chinese imperial governments as we are familiar with in governments today.

¹¹⁹ Many reasons have been suggested for this reluctance. (1) Economic thought at this time held that gold and silver fluctuated in value even more than copper. (2) If Katō Shigeshi (1880–1946) is correct, silver was more valuable in Japan than in China during the Sung. This would inevitably have caused a rapid outflow of silver coins, compounding the problem the government already faced with bronze coins. (3) The fact that Chinese made coins by casting meant that they could easily be forged. At the same time, accurate weight control of the individual coins was difficult to achieve. Thus coins were suitable mainly for “mass production of a low value base metal denomination . . . where the profit margin was small.” M. R. Cowell, J. Cribb, S. G. E. Bowman, and Y. Shashoua, “The Chinese cash: Composition and production,” *Metallurgy in Numismatics* 3 (1993), p. 186.

copper reserves in south China. By contrast, a similar plan to replace the iron coins of Szechwan over ten years had to be canceled after only three years, partly because of a lack of copper reserves in Szechwan. Because of this failure, however, the government came to realize the value of an iron coin zone on the borders as a buffer against the outflow of bronze coins. Later, fiscal problems arising from the war with the Hsi Hsia led the government to create a bimetallic region in the circuits along the northern border; there, both copper and iron coins circulated, each in two denominations.

The government may have found iron coins (*kang-ch'ien*) useful, but the same could hardly be said for merchants and consumers. Hartwell has calculated that, in the early eleventh century, a housewife in Szechwan had to pay one and a half pounds of iron for one pound of salt; a merchant exchanging an ounce of silver would receive 91.25 pounds of iron.¹²⁰ It was in this region, then, that there had flourished since the T'ang a practice of depositing goods or money in deposit shops (*kuei-fang*) and using the certificates of deposit (*chiao-tzu*, *hui-tzu*, *kuan-tzu*) in place of money. Szechwan certificates of deposit were ordinarily called *chiao-tzu*, and the shops that issued them *chiao-tzu p'u*. Early in the eleventh century, the government awarded a private monopoly for the issuance of *chiao-tzu* to sixteen Ch'eng-tu merchants. Some ten years later, using the failure of the merchants to reimburse their clients promptly either as a reason or as a pretext, it took over the monopoly. A Paper Money Office (*Chiao-tzu wu*) was established and officials began issuing for use in Szechwan 1.25 million strings of *chiao-tzu* for fixed periods (*chieh*) of three years, with an iron-coin backing of approximately 29 percent. Thus was born the world's first true paper currency.

The officials of the Sung, usually hard-pressed for revenue, found it difficult to resist the temptation to overwork their new fiscal tool. On the heels of the discovery of paper money itself, then, came the further discovery that excessive issues without sufficient backing inevitably meant debasement and inflation. By 1107, with 26,852,006 strings outstanding, confidence in the *chiao-tzu* had nose-dived. The government decided to replace them with cash vouchers (*ch'ien-yin*) which had been circulating as part of the system for provisioning the armies along the northern borders. The *ch'ien-yin* were not convertible and were also issued in excessive numbers: by the end of the Northern Sung, there may have been as many as 70 million strings in circulation.

In the Southern Sung, cash vouchers were restricted to the Szechwan area, where 53 million were issued in 1204. In the remaining Southern Sung territory, the government at first moved gingerly with paper currency. In 1159, small issues of public certificates (*kung-chu*) and communicating medium

¹²⁰ Hartwell, "The evolution of the early Northern Sung monetary system," p. 288.

(*kuan-tzu*) were aimed primarily at assisting the transfer of funds between the provinces and the capital. Both were eventually superseded by *hui-tzu* or check medium, which began to be issued in 1160 and which became the primary paper currency of the Southern Sung. Interestingly, the *hui-tzu*, as the *chiaotzu* before them, originated in private money shops, in this case those of Lin-an, the Southern Sung capital. Circulation of these private *hui-tzu* was forbidden when the government began to issue its own *hui-tzu*. From 1168 onward, *hui-tzu* were issued in small denominations of 200, 300 and 500 cash, increasing their suitability for smaller transactions and their ability thus to complement silver, which remained the primary medium for large transactions. Strict limitations on *hui-tzu* issue during the first decades of their use helped maintain their value quite well. In 1195, however, the earlier quota of 10 million strings was increased to 30 million. In 1209, some 117.6 million strings were in circulation, and this had risen to 329 million by 1232. From 1247, the three-year time limit on the notes was abandoned. Finally, at the end of the dynasty, the ultimate inflationary measure was attempted with the issuing of cash-communicating medium (*hsien-ch'ien kuan-tzu*). Despite the attractive name, this issue was mere fiat money, with no provision for conversion into cash or precious metal.

CONCLUSION

Fiscal administrators in those days [Southern Sung] must have been superior to ours by myriads and millions of times.

Shen Te-fu (1578–1642)¹²¹

Writing at the end of the Ming in a period of very straitened government finances, Shen might be forgiven for engaging to a certain degree in nostalgia when he looked back at the fiscal administration of the Sung (even the Southern Sung). But, nostalgia or not, there can be no doubt that he is basing himself on historical realities. From our much longer vantage point, it is quite clear that the Sung fiscal administration succeeded remarkably well in collecting the revenues needed to cover unprecedented government expenditures. Even the admittedly inadequate data we have available strongly suggests that the Sung government was able to collect in taxes and other payments a much greater percentage of total national income than the Ming or the Ch'ing dynasties, and probably more than any other premodern government anywhere.¹²²

¹²¹ Huang, "Fiscal administration," p. 126.

¹²² In other words, probably between 10 and 15 percent of GDP. Golas, "The Sung economy: How big?"; Hartwell, "Government finance," pp. 3 ("between nine and seventeen percent"), 21 ("By 1077 ... less than twelve percent of GNP").

The Sung government's success derived, as we have seen, from the evolution of the fiscal administration in directions that enabled the government to extract with unique effectiveness large revenues from the flourishing non-agricultural, commercial sector of the economy. More than any other dynasty, the Sung government was willing to engage directly in production and distribution activities and to enlist the co-operation of private economic actors to help it achieve its fiscal goals. The sources make it abundantly clear that Sung peasants in certain times and places suffered under brutally heavy tax burdens. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that those who worked the fields would have suffered far more (and quite possibly have produced less) without the revenues from commercial activities that enabled the government to keep down the rates of agricultural taxation.¹²³

The operational effectiveness of the Sung fiscal administration was especially apparent in the area of national defense. Not only did the government raise the necessary revenues to support the largest armies in China before the twentieth century but it also solved, especially during the Northern Sung, the great logistical problems of provisioning them. No other Chinese government before or after the Sung showed (or needed to show) a comparable capacity to move vast quantities of grain from the surplus regions of the south to the deficit regions of the north, including the border areas facing the Liao.

In attempting to explain and account for the achievements and limitations of the Sung fiscal administration, it is perhaps appropriate to close with a consideration of those thousands of officials who made the fiscal administration work, very often quite well. Shen Te-fu, for rhetorical purposes, exaggerates their "superiority" to the fiscal officials of the Ming, but their performance in simultaneously generating unprecedented revenues for the state while not choking off the economic growth that made those revenues possible does suggest that they possessed certain capabilities not present to the same degree in the officials of Ming times. We have already mentioned the greater professionalism that brought with it a higher degree of economic literacy, general acceptance of a new level of active government intervention in economic matters, an openness to working more closely with merchants for the benefit of both sides,¹²⁴ and a basic and sometimes quite creative pragmatism that led them to broad-ranging experiments with new approaches to fiscal problems. Thus we have, for example, the skilled local official Tung Wei (d. 1217) arguing for allowing a rise in market prices to relieve famine (by encouraging the local rich to release their stored-up grain to the markets and by attracting

¹²³ Hartwell, "Government finance," pp. 12–13.

¹²⁴ Peter J. Golas, "Financial statecraft: The case of the government monopolies" (unpublished manuscript), pp. 32–3.

grain from other areas) and criticizing as counterproductive in practice efforts by the authorities to hold down prices.¹²⁵ Or even more striking, another able local administrator, Huang Chen (1213–80), was willing to countenance a certain amount of illegality (in this case, permitting some illicit sale of salt by salt-producing households to obtain money for operating expenses) so that the government monopoly would function smoothly.¹²⁶

How deeply such new ideas sometimes penetrated official thinking is strikingly illustrated in the view of Ou-yang Hsiu (1007–72) that the government, if it wished to derive revenues from production and trade, had to be prepared to share the profits with wealthy merchants just as the wealthy merchants, in order to make their large profits, found it expedient to share those profits with small merchants and traders.¹²⁷ Apparently Ou-yang found that his deep Confucian convictions could coexist with an argument that used the private economy as a model for how the government should act.

To be sure, given all the writings of Sung officials that have survived, one finds relatively few echoes of thinking that goes this far. But there is considerable evidence to suggest that Sung officials were, on the whole, more comfortable with economic matters, whether in their official duties or in their personal affairs, than their counterparts in other dynasties. Given that the Sung government, like all imperial Chinese governments down to the nineteenth century, failed to create a fiscal administration in the truest sense of a “specialized administration responsible for the overall management of public finance from the central to the local levels,”¹²⁸ it was that much more dependent on the attitudes and expertise of its many individual officials to keep the complex fiscal mechanism in at least tolerable working order.

¹²⁵ Hymes, “Moral duty and self-regulating process in Southern Sung views of famine relief.”

¹²⁶ Worthy, “Regional control,” p. 137.

¹²⁷ Wang Sheng-to, “Sung-tai ts’ai-cheng yü shang-p’in ching-chi fa-chan,” in *Sung-shih yen-chiu lun-wen chi: 1982 nien nien-hui pien-k’an*, ed. Teng Kuang-ming and Li Chia-chü (Cheng-chou, 1984), pp. 32–57, 52; Shiba Yoshinobu, *Commerce and society in Sung China*, trans. Mark Elvin (Ann Arbor, 1970), p. 194.

¹²⁸ Bastid, “The structure of financial institutions,” p. 52.

CHAPTER 3

A HISTORY OF THE SUNG MILITARY

Wang Tseng-yü, translated by David C. Wright

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE MILITARY IN THE EARLY SUNG

The Sung founder Chao K'uang-yin (T'ai-tsu, 927–76, r. 960–76) was soldier by profession and emperor by virtue of a palace coup, and as he worked to establish his control in the wake of that coup, no problem was more pressing than the control of the military out of which he had emerged. As emperor he swiftly implemented a set of military reforms, concentrating on the goals of centralized authority, unification, and long-term stability. The position and power of military personnel had been increasing ever since the mid-T'ang and the Five Dynasties period (907–60), and ultimately they became the main determiners of the nation's fate.¹ The frontier defence commands (*fan-chen*) could resist the central court, while troop commanders (*pu-chiang*) could kill, expel, and replace field commanders (*chu-shuai*), and powerful generals could replace the emperor. This created political chaos, and civil war was common. Emperor T'ai-tsu, as Chao is known to history, resolved to eliminate the accumulated effects of the 200 years of corruption and neglect which had led to this situation. He recalled a group of high-ranking central military officers and downgraded the Palace Inspectorate-General (*Tien-ch'ien tu tien-chien ssu*), which commanded the imperial guardsmen (*chin-ping*), to the Palace Bureau of the Commander-in-Chief (*Tien-ch'ien tu chih-bui shih ssu*). He also set up two separate officials of equal rank below another Bureau of the Commander-in-Chief which commanded imperial guardsmen – the Imperial Bodyguard (*Shih-wei ch'in-chün*) Bureau of the Commander-in-Chief – and they commanded the

¹ Wang Gungwu, *The structure of power in north China under the Five Dynasties* (Singapore, 1963), remains the classic study in English. For a recent contribution to the substantial bibliography of works on military control under the late Tang and Five Dynasties eras, see Fang Cheng-hua, *Power structures and cultural identities in imperial China: Civil and military power from late Tang to early Song dynasties* (A.D. 875–1063) (Saarbrücken, 2009). These issues are also addressed by Naomi Standen, "The Five Dynasties," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 5, Part 1: *The Sung dynasty and its precursors, 907–1279*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge and New York, 2009), pp. 38–132; and Hugh R. Clark, "The southern kingdoms between the T'ang and the Sung, 907–979," in *ibid.*, pp. 133–205.

cavalrymen and infantrymen separately. By the reign of Emperor Chen-tsung (r. 997–1022), the Imperial Bodyguard Bureau of the Commander-in-Chief was formally divided into two parts: the Imperial Bodyguard Cavalry Bureau of the Commander-in-Chief and the Imperial bodyguard Infantry Bureau of the Commander-in-Chief (*Shih-wei ch'in-chün ma-chün tu-chih-hui shih ssu* and *Shih-wei ch'in-chün pu-chün tu-chih-hui shih ssu* respectively). With this, the Northern Sung's Three Capital Guards (*San-wei*) – which were referred to in abbreviated form as the Palace Command (*Tien-ssu*), the Metropolitan Cavalry Command (*Ma-ssu*), and the Metropolitan Infantry Command (*Pu-ssu*) – system of military management was firmly established. T'ai-tsu employed lower-ranking generals as senior officials (*chang-kuan*) in the Palace Command and the Metropolitan Command (*Shih-wei ssu*), or as expedition commanders so that in their military authority they would mutually restrain and check one another and thus be unable to constitute a threat to the emperor's authority.²

T'ai-tsu continued the Five Dynasties system of making the Bureau of Military Affairs (*Shu-mi-yüan*) the highest military organ and having it take charge of military administration; he did not directly lead the military. The senior officials of the Bureau of Military Affairs were executive officials (*chih-cheng kuan*), and their positions were second only to those of the chief councilors (*tsai-hsiang*). The position of the Bureau of Military Affairs was higher than that of the Three Capital Guards, but the military authority of these two organs served as a mutual check or restraint each on the other. Although the senior officials of the Three Capital Guards and the military districts had charge of the armed forces, they could not engage in military actions unless they had orders from the Bureau of Military Affairs. The Bureau employed more and more civil officials as time went on. During T'ai-tsu's reign, four of the senior officials in the Bureau of Military Affairs were civil officials and six were military officers, or 40 and 60 percent respectively. During T'ai-tsung's reign (976–97), there were twenty-one civilians in the Bureau and fourteen military officials, or 60 and 40 percent respectively. And during the reign of Chen-tsung, twenty-nine civil officials and fourteen

² For English-language studies of the bureaucratic recentralization of military authority under the first three Sung emperors, see Edmund Henry Worthy Jr., "The founding of Sung China, 950–1000: Integrative changes in military and political institutions" (diss., Princeton University, 1975); and John Richard Labadie, "Rulers and soldiers: Perception and management of the military in Northern Sung China, 960–ca. 1060" (diss., University of Washington, 1981). Important Chinese studies include Wang Tseng-yü, *Sung-ch'ao ping-chih ch'u-t'an* (Peking, 1983); Feng Tung-li and Mao Yuan-yu, *Pei-Sung Liao Hsia chün-shih shih*, in *Cbung-kuo chün-shih t'ung-shih* (Peking, 1998), Volume 12; and Ch'en Feng, *Pei Sung wu-chiang ch'ün-t'i yü hsiang-kuan wen-t'i yen-chiu* (Peking, 2004). A classic article on T'ai-tsu's political neutralization of his generals is Nieh Ch'ung-ch'i, "Lun Sung T'ai-tsu shou ping-ch'üan," in Nieh Ch'ung-ch'i, *Sung-shih ts'ung-k'ao* (Peking, 1980), Volume 1, pp. 263–82.

military officers served as senior officials on the Bureau, or 66 and 34 percent respectively.³ Because of the Northern Sung's gradual promotion of civil government, a relationship of "civilian control of the military" (*i wen chih wu*) developed between the Bureau of Military Affairs and the Three Capital Guards. T'ai-tsu took pains to charge the Bureau of Military Affairs with military administration and prohibit interference by the chief councilors. But during the reign of Chen-tsung, the chief councilors could sometimes participate in deliberation on military affairs, and this in fact constituted interference in the military administration of the Bureau of Military Affairs.

The regular armies of the Northern Sung were the imperial armies.⁴ The original meaning of "imperial armies" (*chin-chün*) was the personal army (*ch'in-chün*) of the emperor. During the Five Dynasties period the imperial armies were used as central armies. During the Northern Sung they were enlarged in order to be used as defensive and punitive armies on both central and local levels. The ranking system and unit designations of the Imperial Armies were fairly complex; for the most part, three main divisions or ranks can be distinguished: upper imperial armies, middle imperial armies, and lower imperial armies (*shang, chung, and hsia ch'in-chün*). The upper imperial armies included four armies: P'eng-jih and T'ien-wu (both under the Palace Command), Lung-wei (under the Metropolitan Cavalry Command), and Shen-wei (under the Metropolitan Infantry Command). Together these four armies were called the Four Elite Armies (*Shang ssu chün*). The organizational hierarchy of the imperial armies was as follows:

troop (*tu*): one hundred people,
 commandery (*chih-hui*) or regiment (*ying*): five troops,
 army (*chün*): five commanderies,
 wing (*hsiang*) (left wing, right wing): ten armies.

Because the military power of the army and wing organizational units was relatively large, the commanders of these units could easily create a threat to the imperial authority. The Northern Sung proceeded to create disorder among the wing and army organizational units. Some imperial armies had no wings or armies, while in other imperial armies the manpower of these two units was below the established quotas. For the most part, after the beginning of T'ai-tsung's reign, the commandery was usually the basic organizational unit

³ See Liang T'ien-hsi, *Sung shu-mi-yüan chih-tu* (Taipei, 1981), pp. 12-13; Ch'en, *Pei-Sung wu-chiang*, pp. 107-46.

⁴ For an extended overview of Northern Sung military organization, see Wang, *Sung-ch'ao ping-chih ch'u-t'an*, pp. 9-30; for changes in the Southern Sung, see pp. 127-82. On central and regional military administration during the first half of the Northern Sung, see Michael Charles McGrath, "Military and regional administration in Northern Sung China (960-1126)" (diss., Princeton University, 1982).

of the imperial armies during troop movements, fortifications, and battles. The commanding generals and the various commandery units of the imperial armies were thrown together at a moment's notice and were unfamiliar with each other. This was done to reduce the possible formation of threats to the imperial authority by preventing the development of close relationships between generals and the forces they commanded, but it seriously weakened the fighting ability of the imperial armies. The imperial armies were initially central armies that were stationed at the capital, K'ai-feng, and went out on a rotational basis to fortify the provinces and the frontier. Later, more and more provincially recruited imperial armies (literally "imperial armies close to their region of provisioning" *chiu-liang chin-chün*) were deployed locally, especially in districts along the northern frontier. These provincial imperial armies did not return to be stationed at the capital, but could be rotated to fortify the provinces.⁵

At the beginning of the Northern Sung the deployment of the imperial armies was done according to the principle of inner and outer armies controlling each other. The manpower of the central and local armies was for the most part kept at a one-to-one ratio. The manpower of the central armies stationed in K'ai-feng and of those in the counties outside K'ai-feng was also for the most part kept at a one-to-one ratio; this was also a policy for preventing rebellion by military personnel. Later, however, the policy of inner and outer armies controlling each other was gradually abandoned. Imperial armies stationed in central and local areas were under the separate jurisdiction of the Three Capital Guards. In many prefectures (*chou*) and superior prefectures (*fu*), imperial armies of the Three Capital Guards or of the Metropolitan Cavalry and Infantry Commands were stationed together. For example, Ts'ang-chou (Ho-pei-tung circuit) was host to one commandery of the Palace Command's Kuang-te Army, two commanderies of the Metropolitan Cavalry Command's Yün-i Army, one commandery of its Wan-chieh Army, three commanderies of the Metropolitan Infantry Command's Wu-wei Army, and three commanderies of its Chen-wu Army.⁶ Like a careful flower arrangement, the deployment of the imperial armies of the Three Capital Guards was effected with an eye to the mutual balancing and checking of military power.

In addition to the imperial armies, the Northern Sung permanently maintained prefectural armies (*hsiang-chün*), local militias (*hsiang-ping*), frontier tribal troops (*fan-ping*), local troops (*t'u-ping*), and bowmen (*kung-shou*) as reserve forces. At the beginning of the Northern Sung, the central government

⁵ The major study of the *chiu-liang chin-chün* provincial imperial armies is Koiwai Hiromitsu, *Sōdai beiseishī no kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1998), pp. 11–72.

⁶ Wang, *Sung-ch'ao ping-chih ch'u-t'an*, p. 41.

dispatched the crack troops of each locality to the capital at K'ai-feng. The remaining second-rate troops (and also considerable numbers of criminals sentenced to imprisonment) were organized into prefectural armies. Most of the prefectural armies did not receive military training; they were merely involved in wall and road repair, river dike building, bridge construction, transportation, and other types of hard labor. Some central government organs also set up prefectural armies to participate in various types of industrial labor such as the manufacture of armaments. Most of the prefectural armies did not have wing organizational units, but they did have the three organizational units of army, commandery, and troop. Each of the commanderies in the prefectural armies were under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Cavalry and Infantry Commands, but at the same time they were also directly controlled by the prefects of their respective localities.⁷

The local militias were manned by those on the household registers of the local prefecture and county governments. Males between the ages of nineteen (the minimum age was changed to twenty during the Southern Sung, 1127–1279) and fifty-eight⁸ were organized into groups of militiamen (*min-ping*).⁹ Militiamen were usually engaged in production; only when actually participating in military training or activities were they paid and issued provisions. Most of the local militias existed in name only, but a small number in districts along the frontiers had significant military expertise.

Frontier tribal troops already existed in the northwest during the reign of T'ai-tsung. They were composed of Ch'iang people under the jurisdiction of the Sung court, and they were in actuality similar to local militias. They were the local armies of the northwest region and had considerable fighting ability.¹⁰

For the most part, bowmen and local troops became local security forces only after the beginning of Shen-tsung's reign (1067–85). They were similar to our modern armed police and were commanded by the county defenders (*hsien-wei*) in each county and the police chiefs (*hsün-chien*) of each stockade (*chai*). Local troops were also called stockade troops (*chai-ping*).

Although military conscription was the norm through most of Chinese history, the Sung used volunteers and recruits. This usually involved the recruitment of troops during calamitous years when natural disasters made it

⁷ Wang, *Sung-ch'ao ping-chih ch'u-t'an*, pp. 66–88; Koiwai, *Sōdai beiseishi no kenkyū*, pp. 73–294.

⁸ The ages given here have been converted from the Chinese *sui* to the Western system of age reckoning by subtracting one from the *sui* figure.

⁹ On the age of able-bodied men during Sung times, see Hsü Sung et al., comps., *Sung hui-yao chi-kao* (Peking, 1997) (hereafter SHY (1997)) *Shih-huo* 66, p. 6215; 70, p. 6372.

¹⁰ For a careful study of the tribal brigades in northwest China during the Sung, with copious references, see Kim Sōng-gyu, *Sōdai no seiboku mondai to iminzoku seisaku* (Tōkyō, 2000).

impossible for peasants to make a livelihood, and it could be an effective safety valve for preventing rebellions or uprisings by destitute and unemployed people. However, the press was still used when the number of recruits was insufficient. In addition to this, the government encouraged the children of military families to succeed their fathers and elder brothers in the military.

T'ai-tsu selected strong and healthy soldiers as "model soldiers" and sent them to each locality to serve as visible standards for the recruitment of soldiers. Height measurements and eyesight examinations were later used in the recruitment of soldiers, with large men serving in the imperial armies and weak or small men serving in the prefectural armies. After soldiers were recruited they were required to have their faces or arms tattooed with the designation of their military unit in order to prevent desertion. This was the same system which had been used since the mid-T'ang and Five Dynasties periods. There were many salaried ranks for officers and men and also several specific types of allowance. Most of the military personnel, however, received very small allowances, thus making it difficult for them to maintain a living.

Serving in the military was a kind of profession, and the soldiers and their family dependents usually lived together in military camps. T'ai-tsu placed much emphasis on military training and insisted that the soldiers' food and clothing be simple and spartan to enable them to endure the difficulties and hardships of military life. He also took care to engage in frequent weeding out of old and weak soldiers.

T'ai-tsu, mindful of the lax military discipline that had been common during the Five Dynasties period, made special efforts to strengthen military law after he succeeded Emperor Shih-tsung (921–59, r. 954–9) of the Later Chou. The ranking system (*chieh-chi fa*) was the basic overall method used by the Sung for directing the military. There is some disagreement about whether the ranking system was established by Emperor Shih-tsung of the Later Chou or by T'ai-tsu. It strictly regulated the subordinate relationships between officers and soldiers of each rank. If subordinates offended their superiors or informed on them, they were severely punished or even executed. A second important provision of military law was the prohibition against desertion. At first it was required that imperial troops who deserted for more than one day be executed. Later this provision was changed so that most imperial troops who deserted three times were executed, as were prefectural troops who deserted five times.¹¹

¹¹ Yu Piao, "Sung-tai shih-ping t'ao-wang-fa k'ao-shu," in *Sung-shih yen-chiu lun-wen chi*, ed. Ch'i Hsia et al. (K'un-ming, 1997), pp. 36–57.

During the reign of T'ai-tsu the military was relatively skilled and well trained. From 968 to 976, the number of people in the armed forces was 378,000, of whom 193,000 were in the imperial armies and 185,000 in the prefectural armies. During the later years of T'ai-tsung's reign, from 995 to 997, the number of people in the armed forces doubled to 660,000, of whom 350,000 were in the imperial armies and 308,000 in the prefectural armies. At the beginning of Chen-tsung's reign it was already claimed that 1 million soldiers were being maintained. From 1017 to 1021 this number decreased to 912,000, of whom 432,000 were in the imperial armies and 480,000 were in the prefectural armies. The armed forces of this period were, then, lavishly provided with manpower.

T'ai-tsu placed much emphasis on the quality of weapons manufacturing. Weapons stored in arsenals at the beginning of the Northern Sung were still in excellent condition at the end of the Northern Sung 150 years later.

THE MILITARY HISTORY OF THE NORTHERN SUNG

Reuniting the empire: early Northern Sung

T'ai-tsu was an excellent and widely experienced military strategist.¹² During his reign he pacified various states in southern China. In actuality, the military might of the forces sent out each time by the Sung court were not substantially greater than those of the enemy, but because of T'ai-tsu's superior strategic direction, proper command by Sung generals on the battlefield, and the superior fighting strength of the Sung armies, victory was secured in all wars with the southern kingdoms (Ten Kingdoms, 902–79). For example, during the pacification of the Southern T'ang (937–75) in 974 and 975, T'ai-tsu realized that the strong walled defences at the Southern T'ang capital, Chin-ling (modern Nanking in Kiangsu), might be able to withstand protracted siege warfare. He therefore constructed the largest pontoon bridge or chain of boats the ancient world had ever known, at Ts'ai-shih (modern

¹² For English-language studies of the military accomplishments of T'ai-tsu and T'ai-tsung, see Worthy, "The founding of Sung China, 950–1000"; Peter Allan Lorge, "War and the creation of the Northern Sung" (diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1996); and Lau Nap-yin (Liu Li-ye) and Huang Kuan-chung, "Founding and consolidation of the Sung dynasty under T'ai-tsu (960–976), T'ai-tsung (976–997), and Chen-tsung (997–1022)," in *The Cambridge History of China*, Volume 5, Part 1: *The Sung dynasty and its precursors*, 907–1279, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge and New York, 2009), pp. 206–78. The wars of unification are surveyed in Feng and Mao, *Pei-Sung Liao Hsia chün-shih*, pp. 25–91. One of the most useful studies of Northern Sung warfare from the perspectives of strategy and policy debate is Tsang Shui-lung (Tseng Jui-lung), "War and peace in Northern Sung China: Violence and strategy in flux, 960–1104 A.D." (diss., University of Arizona, 1997).

Mount Ma-an in Anhwei).¹³ This bridge, which spanned the entire width of the Yangtze river, guaranteed the arrival of reinforcements to bolster the military might of the Sung armies and allowed the crack troops in the rear to receive their provisions. Chin-ling was ultimately captured.

Some wars, however, were lost during the reign of T'ai-tsu. The Northern Han (951–79) was a poor state with a small territory and few subjects, but by relying on the sturdy walled fortifications at T'ai-yüan prefecture (*T'ai-yüan fu*) and the backing of the Khitan Liao (Liao dynasty, 907–1125), it was able to fend off two Sung offensives in 968 and 969. Even though T'ai-tsu personally led the latter of these two offensives, he could not take T'ai-yüan and was forced to withdraw his troops. T'ai-tsu's adoption of a "first south, then north" (*hsien-nan hou-pei*) strategy in quelling the various states was influenced by his failed offensive against the Northern Han. T'ai-tsung, absorbing the lessons of T'ai-tsu's failure in attacking the Northern Han, made thorough military deployments and succeeded in intercepting Liao reinforcements, and in 979 the Northern Han was finally pacified. An order was then issued that the city and walls of T'ai-yüan be razed. Emperor T'ai-tsung was an arrogant man of mediocre military ability. Except for his pacification of the Northern Han and his quelling of the rebellions of Wang Hsiao-p'o (d. 994) and Li Shun (d. 994) in Szechwan during the latter part of his reign, almost all of the wars he conducted ended in failure.

To the north of the Northern Sung was the Liao, a first-rate East Asian superpower which had as its ruling group the Khitans.¹⁴ To a considerable extent, the Khitans had maintained the nomadic customs of hunting from horseback and kept large and powerful cavalry forces. The Liao cavalry was somewhat disorganized but ingenious and energetic in its military techniques. Ever since the T'ang lost control of the horse-producing grassland territories in the northwest as a result of the rebellion of An Lu-shan (703–57), there had been a shortage of horses in the Central Plains region of China. The Sung had no choice but to make the infantry the mainstay of its military, and even in the cavalry forces foot-soldiers often outnumbered cavalymen. It was only natural, then, that the Liao cavalry had a considerable advantage over the Sung infantry in battles fought on the open plains. Matters were made even worse

¹³ Wang Tseng-yü, "Sung-tai heng-k'ua Ch'ang-chiang te ta fou-ch'iao," *She-hui k'o-bsüeh chan-hsien*, 6 No. 4 (1983), pp. 141–2.

¹⁴ For surveys of early relations between the Sung and the Liao, see Tao Jing-shen (T'ao Chin-sheng), *Two sons of heaven: Studies in Sung-Liao relations* (Tucson, 1988), pp. 10–24; Denis C. Twitchett and Klaus-Peter Tietze, "The Liao," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 6: *Alien regimes and border states*, 907–1368, ed. Herbert Franke and Denis C. Twitchett (Cambridge, 1994), especially pp. 84–110; and David Curtis Wright, *From war to diplomatic parity in eleventh-century China: Sung's foreign relations with Khitan Liao* (Leiden, 2005).

for the Sung military because of T'ai-tsung's incorrect strategic directives and the incompetence and cowardice of most of the Sung's high-ranking military officers. Individual officers such as the valiant and militarily adroit Yang Yeh (d. 986) had no choice but to obey orders from their incompetent superiors. For these reasons, the Sung armies were repeatedly defeated in their battles with the Liao.

In 979 Emperor T'ai-tsung, acting against the advice of several high-ranking military commanders, made plans to ride the tide of national prestige that had followed the Sung's conquest of the Northern Han. He planned to recover with a single stroke the Yen (modern Ho-pei) and Yün (modern Shansi) regions ceded to the Liao by the Later Chin (936–47) earlier in the century. The Sung forces, exhausted after their battles with the Northern Han, mounted a long siege of the walled city of Yen-ching (Yu-chou, modern Peking), but failed to take the city. The Liao brought in reserve forces at the last stage of the siege and decisively defeated the Sung armies, and T'ai-tsung himself was struck by two arrows during the ensuing flight. After this T'ai-tsung did not dare to undertake any military expeditions under his personal command; instead he remained deep within his palace and continuously issued impractical commands and compelled his frontline commanders to implement them. In 986 the Sung mounted a new three-pronged northern offensive against the Liao, but every segment of it was crushed by the Liao defence and the valiant general Yang Yeh was killed in battle. After this the Sung did not launch any more attacks against the Liao and instead implemented only passive defensive measures; troops were deployed to defend cities along the border areas, and in the plains moats were dug and rice paddies constructed in an effort to hinder any possible cavalry attack by the Liao. This passive defense strategy was continued from the reign of T'ai-tsung until the end of the dynasty.

The Tangut (later Hsi Hsia dynasty, 1032–1227) leader Li Chi-ch'ien (963–1004, r. 982–1004) did not possess a strong military when he rebelled against the Sung and established himself as the leader of the Tangut people. However, he ingeniously manipulated the hostile relations between the Liao and the Sung to further his own purposes. He also took advantage of the desolation and logistical difficulties presented by the northwestern regions of the Sung territory and beat back several offensives by Sung forces. He ultimately captured Ling-chou (near modern Ling-wu in Ningsia) in 1002 and established what amounted to a new regime. With this, a triangular pattern of relations between the Tanguts, Sung, and Liao developed.¹⁵

¹⁵ On early relations between the Sung and the Tanguts, see Ruth Dunnell, "The Hsi Hsia," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 6: *Alien regimes and border states*, 907–1368, ed. Herbert Franke and Denis C. Twitchett (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 154–76; and Tsang, "War and peace in Northern Sung China,"

In northern Vietnam Chiao-chih (Tongkin, modern Hanoi), once the An-nan Protectorate (*An-nan tu-bu-fu*) under the T'ang, was gradually transformed into a Vietnamese warlord regime with a loose allegiance to the Southern Han (917–71) and then in 939 became a de facto independent kingdom.¹⁶ However, after its first king (Ngo Vuong Quyen, r. 939–44) died in 944 the area collapsed again into anarchy. Eventually Dinh Bo-linh (Dinh Tien-Hoang De, r. 965–79) reunified the country and re-established order. In 965 he proclaimed himself king, still acknowledging the Southern Han emperor as his overlord, and in 966 gave himself the title of emperor of Dai Co Viet (modern Vietnam). In 970 he proclaimed a reign title for his dynasty. He began organizing a stable state regime, and a powerful army, but still maintained the nominal tributary link with the Sung court. In 979 Bo Linh was murdered. A short civil war left Le Hoan (Le Dai-Hanh Hoang-De, r. 980–1005) the new ruler. During 980 and 981 T'ai-tsung dispatched troops from the north for a long-range punitive expedition against Dai Co Viet, which they still called Chiao-chih. Most of the Sung troops were northerners unaccustomed to the natural environment and climate of the south, and many of them fell ill and died. This seriously weakened the military effectiveness of the expedition, and T'ai-tsung ultimately had no choice but to call the invasion off and make emergency provisions for the food and medical care of the troops. T'ai-tsung's designs to reconquer northern Vietnam thus ended in failure.

In 1004 the Liao launched a major attack against the Sung. The Liao forces avoided attacking and subduing the Sung's many urban strongholds in northern Ho-pei (Ho-pei lu) and instead made a dangerous and risky foray deep into the Sung hinterland. The timid Emperor Chen-tsung of the Sung, however, did not dare take advantage of this prime opportunity to annihilate the Liao armies, and in his eagerness to seek peace he ultimately secured a lopsided peace accord with the Liao in the Treaty of Shan-yüan (1005), in which the Sung agreed to remit 200,000 bolts of silk and 100,000 taels of silver annually to the Liao.¹⁷ The economic losses incurred by these annual payments were, however, mitigated to some extent by the trade which occurred along certain border areas. The long period of peaceful Sung–Liao relations that followed gave the Sung a false sense of security, and national defense policies were typically very lax.

pp. 160–212. Major Chinese studies of relations between Sung and the Tanguts include Wu Ti'en-ch'ih, *Hsi-hsia shih-kao* (Chengtu, 1983); and Li Huajui, *Sung-Hsia kuan-hsi shih* (Shih-chia-chuang, 1998).

¹⁶ See James A. Anderson, *The rebel den of Nùng Tri Cao: Loyalty and identity along the Sino-Vietnamese frontier* (Seattle, 2007), chapter 3.

¹⁷ See Lau Nap-yin (Liu Li-yen), "Waging war for peace? The peace accord between the Song and the Liao in AD 1005," in *Warfare in Chinese history*, ed. Hans Van de Ven (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 2000), pp. 180–221; and Wright, *From war to diplomatic parity*, chapter 2.

The northwestern threat: mid-Northern Sung

During the forty-five years of the reigns of Emperors Jen-tsung (1022–63) and Ying-tsung (1063–7), the main military development was the outbreak of large-scale hostilities with the Tangut Hsi Hsia state.¹⁸ The Hsi Hsia had a small territory and few subjects but placed much emphasis on the development of heavily armored cavalymen and hardy, far-travelling infantrymen. In its confrontations with the Hsi Hsia, the Sung military continued to use the traditional strategy of deploying troops for the defense of walled cities. Shen-hsi (Shen-hsi lu) was divided into four military districts (Ching-yüan, Fu-yen, Hsi-ho, and Huan-ch'ing lu). These defensive deployments resulted in a drastic reduction of their available mobile forces. The Hsi Hsia, on the other hand, concentrated as many troops as possible for every clash with the Sung. In the battle of San-ch'uan-k'ou (to the northwest of modern Yen-an in Shensi) in 1040, the battle of Hao-shui-ch'uan (east of modern Lung-te in Ningsia) in 1041, and the battle of Ting-ch'uan-chai (to the northwest of modern Ku-yüan in Ningsia) in 1042, the numerically superior Hsi Hsia destroyed the Sung armies. The Sung was, however, a very large country capable of absorbing depletions of its military strength, and the Hsi Hsia armies did not have sufficient strength to attack and occupy the important Sung border cities. A peace agreement was temporarily achieved after the two states were wearied with military confrontations.

During the reigns of T'ai-tsung and Chen-tsung, large forces were concentrated mainly in Ho-pei and Ho-tung (Ho-tung lu) to resist the Liao armies. But during the reign of Jen-tsung the war with the Hsi Hsia and the continuous small-scale domestic rebellions led the Sung court to expand the military forces in Shen-hsi and the hinterland to more than 860 commanderies. Between 1041 and 1048, the Sung court assumed the enormous financial burden of maintaining 1,259,000 troops, with 826,000 in the imperial armies and 433,000 in the prefectural armies. A program of continuous disarmament was implemented after 1048, and by the mid-1060s, or the latter part of the reign of Ying-tsung, the number of troops was reduced to 1,162,000, of whom 663,000 were in the imperial armies and 499,000 in the prefectural armies. The system of military checks and balances developed during the early Northern Sung also underwent changes. During the reign of Jen-tsung, the

¹⁸ Studies of this first major war between the Sung and the self-proclaimed Hsi Hsia empire include Evgenii I. Kychanov, "Les guerres entre les Sung du Nord et le Hsi-Hsia," in *Études Song: Sung studies in memoriam Étienne Balazs*, ed. Françoise Aubin (Paris, 1971), pp. 103–18; Tsang, "War and peace in Northern Sung China," chapters 6–8, pp. 160–324; Li, *Sung-Hsia kuan-hsi shih*, pp. 40–56; and Michael Charles McGrath, "Frustrated empires: The Song–Tangut war of 1038–44," in *Battlefronts real and imagined: War, border, and identity in the Chinese middle period*, ed. Don J. Wyatt (New York, 2008), pp. 151–90.

forces stationed inside and outside K'ai-feng numbered 684 commanderies, and the forces stationed in the various circuits of the north numbered 1,048 commanderies. Forces stationed in the south, however, numbered only 195 commanderies.¹⁹

During the reign of Jen-tsung the senior officials in the Bureau of Military Affairs numbered sixty civilian officials (*wen-kuan*) and sixteen military officers (*wu-kuan*), or 79 and 21 percent respectively.²⁰ During the reign of Ying-tsung the numbers were eleven civilian and one military, or 92 and 8 percent respectively. Most of the military officers in the Bureau of Military Affairs were junior-level appointees; senior-level military appointees were often regarded with suspicion and impeached. The Bureau of Military Affairs was, then, for the most part civilianized. By this time the traditional policy (dating from the early Northern Sung) that chief councilors were not to participate in deciding military business of the Bureau of Military Affairs had already been altered, and chief councilors either served concurrently as senior officials in the Bureau of Military Affairs or participated in the discussion and consideration of military affairs.

During the early Northern Sung, the designation of military and war districts was provisional in nature, and most of the commanders over these areas were military generals. During the reigns of T'ai-tsung and Chen-tsung, however, there were more and more cases of civilian officials being appointed to these areas as senior supervisory officials over the military generals. The designation of military districts became fixed during the reign of Jen-tsung, and these districts included the four (later increased to five) Shen-hsi circuits and the four Ho-tung and Ho-pei circuits. The civilian prefects in the prefectural seats of each circuit served concurrently as the military commissioners (*ching-lieh an-fu-shih*) of the circuits, and the chief administration officer (*tu-pu-shu*) – later changed to supreme area commander (*tu-tsung-kuan*) – became the senior official over the military district.²¹

With this, the system of triune military leadership by the central Bureau of Military Affairs, the Three Capital Guards, and the military commissioners was firmly established. The principle of civilian control of the military was inherent throughout the structure of Sung government, from the central authorities all the way down to the circuits. Such measures were, of course, undertaken as precautions against possible rebellion by the military generals,

¹⁹ Wang, *Sung-ch'ao ping-chih ch'u-t'an*, p. 33.

²⁰ Liang, *Sung shu-mi-yüan chih-tu*, p. 13.

²¹ On the evolution of the military circuits, see McGrath, "Military and regional administration," chapter 2, pp. 18–111; on the shift to civilian control of both the military commissionerships and the top operational command positions, see *ibid.*, chapter 5, pp. 189–290; and Chen, *Pei-Sung wu-chiang*, chapter 5, pp. 189–250.

but the price for these precautions was the severe weakening of the Sung's military capabilities.

The reign of Shen-Tsung: military reforms and border wars

After his accession to the throne, Emperor Shen-tsung took as his goals the enrichment of the nation and the strengthening of the military.²² He appointed Wang An-shih (1021–86; in power 1069–74, 1075–76) as chief councilor and implemented reforms of the military system. The number of troops maintained by the Northern Sung steadily increased. For the most part, the enormous numbers on the military registers during and after the reign of T'ai-tsung were inflated and inaccurate representations of the actual numbers. According to regulations, each commandery should have been 400 or 500 troops strong, but sometimes they had only 100 or 200 troops. It was easier for corrupt commanders and officers to steal funds allocated for maintaining troops when the quotas of the military units were not completely full. In addition, infrequent inspections allowed many aged and weakened soldiers to remain within the ranks, and this seriously reduced the combat readiness of the Sung military. It was with these accumulated evils in mind that Emperor Shen-tsung and Wang An-shih began drastic reductions of excess troops. From first to last they did away with more than thirty imperial army units and reduced the number of commanderies by combining several of them. With these measures the number of troops was reduced to less than 900,000, which was lower than the number maintained by Emperor Chen-tsung.

In order to remedy misunderstandings between officers and men and strengthen military discipline, Emperor Shen-tsung implemented the Area Generalship System (*Chiang-ping fa*), in which various commanderies of the imperial armies were combined to form area generalships (*chiang*).²³ For the same purpose Emperor Shen-tsung also promoted the Company System (*Chieh-tui fa*), in which companies (*tui*), the basic unit of military organization during the Sung, were organized and divided into various sub-company

²² For overviews of the military reforms enacted under Shen-tsung and Wang An-shih, see Teng Kuang-ming, "Wang An-shih tui Pei-Sung ping-chih te kai-ko ts'o-shih chi ch'i she-hsiang," in *Sung-shih yen-chiu lun-wen-chi*, ed. Teng Kuang-ming and Ch'eng Ying-liu (Shanghai, 1982), pp. 311–20; Wang, *Sung-ch'ao ping-chih ch'u-t'ien*, chapter 4, especially pp. 95–126; and Feng and Mao, *Pei-Sung Liao Hsia Chün-shih shih*, chapter 8, pp. 277–312. Tsang Shui-lung analyses the military reforms of Shen-tsung and Wang An-shih in the larger context of evolving national strategy in "War and peace in Northern Sung China," chapter 9, pp. 325–97.

²³ On the *chiang-ping fa*, see Feng and Mao, *Pei-Sung Liao Hsia Chün-shih shih*, pp. 287–91; and Wang Tseng-yü's entry in *Chung-kuo li-shih ta tz'u-tien: Sung shih*, ed. Chung-kuo li-shih ta tz'u-tien and Sung-shih chüan pien-ts'an wei-yüan-hui (Shanghai, 1984), p. 355.

units, the smallest of which contained only three men.²⁴ The designation of area generalships had begun in four circuits of Shen-hsi during the reign of Jen-tsung. In Fu-yen circuit (Fu-yen lu), for example, the imperial armies had been divided into six area generalships, with the troop strength of each generalship at 3,000 or more. During the Shen-tsung reign Ts'ai T'ing (1014-79), the military commissioner of Ching-yüan Circuit (Ching-yüan lu) in Shen-hsi, divided the military in his circuit into seven area generalships. After Ts'ai was promoted to the position of Vice Military Affairs Commissioner (*Shu-mi fu-shih*), he helped Emperor Shen-tsung promote the Area Generalship System in the various localities of the Sung empire. Thirty-seven area generalships were established in four circuits in Ho-pei, with twelve in Ho-tung circuit, nine in Ching-tung circuit (Ching-tung lu), six in Ching-hsi circuit (Ching-hsi lu), and eleven in the counties of K'ai-feng prefecture (K'ai-feng fu). In Shen-hsi, nine area generalships were established in Fu-yen circuit, nine in Huan-ch'ing circuit (Huan-ch'ing lu), five (and later nine) in Ch'in-feng circuit (Ch'in-feng lu), eleven in Ching-yüan circuit, five Chinese (*Han*) area generalships and five tribal (*Fan*) area generalships in Hsi-ho circuit (Hsi-ho lu), and thirteen area generalships in the various other circuits in the southeast.²⁵

These area generalships were organized by combining the variously designated commanderies of the imperial armies. For example, the Second Area Generalship of the K'ai-feng area encompassed the stationed armies of five of the sixteen counties of K'ai-feng prefecture. These included, but were not limited to, the Sixth and Seventh Wu-ch'i Cavalry Commanderies, cavalrymen from the First Hsiao-meng Commandery, and infantrymen from the Seventy-Fifth and Seventy-Seventh Hsiao-chung Commanderies, all of which contained 410 troops per commandery; and eleven commanderies from the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Infantry Commanderies of the First Army of the Kuang-yung Army's Left Wing, all of which contained 510 per commandery, for a total of 7,660 troops.²⁶

The ranks of military officers in the area generalship system included general (*cheng-chiang*) and vice general. Fifty troops formed a company, and above the companies and below the area generalships were the regiments (*pu*). This led to the three-tiered organizational structure of area generalship, regiment, and company. For example, in Ching-yüan each area generalship was divided

²⁴ On the *chieh-tui fa*, see Wang, *Sung-ch'ao ping-chih ch'u-t'an*, pp. 107-14; and Wang's entry in *Cbung-kuo li-shih ta tz'u-tien: Sung shih*, pp. 72-3.

²⁵ Li Ch'ang-hsien, "Sung-tai Chiang-ping chu-ti k'ao-shu," in *Sung-shih yen-chiu lun-wen chi: 1992 nien nien-hui pien-k'an*, ed. Teng Kuang-ming et al. (K'ai-feng, 1993), pp. 320-40.

²⁶ Ch'ien Yüeh-yu, *Hsien-ch'un Lin-an chih*, in *Sung-Yüan fang-chih ts'ung-k'an* (1268; Peking, 1990), Volume 4, pp. 3862-3.

into front, rear, left, and right regiments. Each regiment had jurisdiction over twenty-five companies, or 1,250 troops.²⁷

The troops of the imperial armies organized into area generalships were referred to as area generalship imperial armies (*hsi-chiang chin-ping*). In every locality a portion of the imperial armies retained their original commandery unit designations and were not organized into area generalships. These units were referred to as non-area generalship imperial armies (*pu hsi-chiang chin-ping*). From the beginning of the reign of Emperor Shen-tsung, then, the imperial armies were divided into three parts: area generalship imperial armies, non-area generalship imperial armies, and capital imperial armies.²⁸

Emperor Shen-tsung and Wang An-shih promoted the *pao-chia* system as the village-level political structure. Every five households constituted one *pao* (security group) and were headed up by a security-group head (*pao-chang*); five *pao* formed a large *pao* headed by a large security-group head (*ta pao-chang*); and ten large *pao* formed a superior security group (*tu-pao*) headed by a superior security-group head (*fu-pao-cheng*) and his assistant (*fu tu-pao-cheng*).²⁹ The Sung court issued commands that rudimentary military training be promoted in the *pao-chia* units. According to statistics compiled in 1081, the *pao-chia* militiamen and commanders who participated in military training amounted to more than 690,000 people. This military training created great disturbances and burdens for the people, and some local militiamen attempted to avoid their militia responsibilities by flight or even by crippling themselves. Although the Sung engaged in *pao-chia* militia training for many years, the *pao-chia* militia forces were never employed as regular troops in battle; they were instead assigned merely as support personnel to provide transportation, logistics, and the holding of urban centers.

In an effort to strengthen military training, Emperor Shen-tsung commissioned instructors (*chiao-t'ou*), inspection commissioners (*hsün-chiao shih-ch'en*), and drill instructors (*hsun-lien kuan*) and charged them with the responsibility

²⁷ Calculated based on Li T'ao, *Hsü tzü-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien* (Peking, 1979-95) (hereafter *HCP* (1979)) 297, pp. 7220-1. See Wang, *Sung-ch'ao ping-chih ch'u-t'an*, p. 110.

²⁸ For a more detailed explanation, see Wang, *Sung-ch'ao ping-chih ch'u-t'an*, pp. 95-106.

²⁹ The political context of the *pao-chia* (or mutual security) reform is reviewed in Paul Jakov Smith, "Shen-tsung's reign and the new policies of Wang An-shih, 1067-1085," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 5, Part 1: *The Sung dynasty and its precursors*, 907-1279, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge and New York, 2009), pp. 407-14. For the evolution of the measure over the course of the Northern and Southern Sung, see Sogabe Shizuo, "Ö An-seki no hokō hō," in *Sōdai seikeishi no kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1974), pp. 1-63. Note that originally under the *pao-chia* system there were ten households in one *pao*; this was later changed to five households in one *pao*.

of providing military training. This did not, however, significantly improve the quality of military training.³⁰

Most of the military achievements of the reign of Emperor Shen-tsung occurred in 1072 and 1073, when Wang Shao (1030–81) led forces in an attack on the relatively weak and internally divided T'u-fan people.³¹ Sung forces captured and occupied Hsi-chou (modern Lin-t'ao in Kansu), Ho-chou (to the northeast of modern Lin-hsia in Kansu), and other places, and Emperor Shen-tsung installed some of the T'u-fan leaders as officials in the Chinese empire in order to consolidate his rule over these newly captured areas.

Between 1075 and 1077 Dai Co Viet or Annam (modern Vietnam) made war on the Sung and surrounded and besieged Yung-chou (modern Nan-ning in Kwangsi), butchering more than 50,000 of its inhabitants. Wang An-shih advocated seizing this opportunity to conquer Cochin China. The Sung court, however, repeated the errors committed by T'ai-tsung during his war with Cochin China: approximately 100,000 troops and 200,000 drafted labourers were committed to the Sung offensive, but these were once again northerners unaccustomed to the natural environment and climate of the south. More than half of them died, and ultimately the Sung had no choice but to withdraw their troops and negotiate for peace.³²

Wang An-shih believed that the four circuits of Shen-hsi, which together had a population four times that of the Hsi Hsia, could easily destroy the Hsi Hsia if only the Sung commanders used the correct strategy. Wang An-shih was, however, a political, not a military, strategist, and he did not come up with any noteworthy military strategy or tactics. After 1076, when war again broke out between the Sung and the Hsi Hsia, the Hsi Hsia proved unable to wage large-scale protracted siege warfare even though the mobility of their cavalry forces was excellent, and they were instead reduced to continuously harassing the Sung borders. In 1081 Emperor Shen-tsung mobilized an extraordinarily large military offensive and entered deep into the Hsi Hsia hinterland. In response the Hsi Hsia implemented a scorched-earth strategy, retreated to their strongholds, and used light cavalry troops to cut off the Sung

³⁰ Paul Jakov Smith describes the impact of the *pao-chia* reforms on the role of imperial arms instructors in "*Shuihu zhuan* and the military subculture of the Northern Song, 960–1127," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 66 No. 2 (December 2006), pp. 363–422.

³¹ For an overview of Shen-tsung's military campaigns, see Smith, "Shen-tsung's reign," pp. 464–78; and his "Irredentism as political capital: The new policies and the annexation of Tibetan domains in Hehuang (the Qinghai–Gansu highlands) under Shenzong and his sons, 1068–1108," in *Emperor Huizong and late Northern Song China: The politics of culture and the culture of politics*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Maggie Bickford (Cambridge, MA, 2006), pp. 78–130. The broadest overview of New Policies grand strategy and the accompanying debates is Tsang, "War and peace in Northern Sung China," chapters 10 and 11.

³² On the political dimensions of the Sino-Vietnamese war, see Anderson, *The rebel den of Nung Tri Cao*, chapter 6, pp. 119–51.

supply lines. As a result, two Sung armies retreated due to lack of provisions. Two other Sung armies joined forces at the walls of Hsi-p'ing-fu (near modern Ling-wu in Ningsia), but Hsi Hsia forces breached the dikes of the Yellow River, inundating the Sung encampments and occasioning their withdrawal in utter defeat. In 1082 the Sung court seriously threatened the Hsi Hsia by building up Yung-lo city (northwest of modern Mi-chih in Shensi province) at a militarily important vantage point. The Hsi Hsia responded by completely surrounding the city with large military forces. Yung-lo eventually fell to the Hsi Hsia after its wells had run dry and the greater part of the officers and men within its walls had died of thirst.³³

The great defeats at Hsi-p'ing-fu and Yung-lo were due mainly to Sung failures, including the blunders in military strategy committed by Shen-tsung himself. From another perspective, however, these defeats reflected the shortcomings and breakdowns of the contemporary military reforms. Emperor Shen-tsung, who had devoted so much of his time and energy to strengthening the Sung state, was so bitterly disappointed by these developments that his mental well-being suffered greatly, and he soon fell ill and died.

Military disaster in the late Northern Sung

When the court of Emperor Shen-tsung was doing battle with Cochin China, the Sung forces were provisionally organized into nine armies. This method of military organization came to be known as the "Annamese Nine Army Model" (*An-nan chiu-chün fa*). The unit designations of these armies were the Left First Army, Left Second Army, Right First Army, Right Second Army, Front First Army, Front Second Army, Rear First Army, Rear Second Army, and Central Army.³⁴ On the battlefields of Shen-hsi the Annamese Nine Army Model was quickly adopted and applied to five armies (Left, Right, Front, Rear, and Central Armies). By the reigns of Che-tsung (1085–1100) and Hui-tsung (1100–25), this new type of army organization was gradually assuming a permanent form and accommodating the four basic organizational subunits of army (*chün*), area generalship (*chiang*), regiment (*pu*), and company (*tui*). These organizational subunits differed from the wing, army, commandery, and troop units of the imperial armies. In the armies were established the official ranks of commander-general (*t'ung-chih*) and vice commander-general

³³ For close studies of the 1081–2 campaigns, see Paul Christopher Forage, "The Sino-Tangut war of 1081–1085," *Journal of Asian History* 25 No. 1 (1991), 1–28; and his "Science, technology, and war in Song China: Reflections in the *Brush talks from the dream creek* by Shen Kuo (1031–1095)" (diss., University of Toronto, 1991), pp. 59–81; on the series of wars with the Tanguts under Shen-tsung, see Li, *Sung-Hsia kuan-hsi shih*, pp. 176–200.

³⁴ Wang, *Sung-ch'ao ping-chih ch'u-t'an*, pp. 110–11.

(*t'ung-ling*). The generalships as established during the reign of Shen-tsung became military organizational units one level below the armies. In the 1122 Sung attack on the Liao, the military forces in the eastern and western circuits were divided up into twelve armies, a total which included the Central Army, Left Army, Right Army, Front Army, Rear Army, and the Hsüan-feng Army.³⁵ In 1126 Prince K'ang (later Emperor Kao-tsung of the Southern Sung dynasty) established the Grand Marshal Headquarters (*Ping-ma ta-yüan-shuai fu*) in Ho-pei, and this was composed of five armies. Commanding each of these armies was a commander-general, and over all five of the armies was a supreme commandant,³⁶ who acted as the commander-in-chief. This new system of military organization was continued into the Southern Sung.

During the reign of Emperor T'ai-tsu, eunuchs were not allowed to participate in military affairs. Beginning with the reign of T'ai-tsung, however, the Sung emperors occasionally commissioned eunuchs to direct military affairs or appointed them as mounted couriers (*tsou-ma ch'eng-shou*) to convey orders and report messages. Emperor Hui-tsung had great trust in the eunuch T'ung Kuan (1054-1126), who had been given a long-term appointment as a commanding general of five military districts in Shen-hsi for his earlier successful conduct of the military affairs of that area. Emperor Hui-tsung also gave a long-term post over the Three Capital Guards to Kao Ch'iu (d. 1126), his favored and trusted but militarily inept confidant. Kao Ch'iu held the office of Senior Official over the Palace Command, which was the highest of the posts in the Three Capital Guards. T'ung Kuan and Kao Ch'iu seriously corrupted the administration of the Sung military. Even though there were many personnel on the military registers, personnel vacancies accounted for more than one-third of the total listed personnel.³⁷

Although the military during the Northern Sung was on the decline, it still had an advantage in the wars with the Hsi Hsia. The long-term intermittent warfare with the Hsi Hsia made the Sung very familiar with the strategy and tactics of the Hsi Hsia military. During the first half of the Northern Sung, crack troops were concentrated mainly in Ho-pei in an effort to confront the threat posed by the Liao military. During and after the reign of Emperor Jen-tsung the Shen-hsi forces gradually became the crack

³⁵ Hsü Meng-hsin, *San-ch'ao pei-meng hui-pien*, 2 vols. (196; Shanghai, 1987) 6, p. 40. The *San-ch'ao pei-meng hui-pien* (Collection of documents on the treaties with the north during three reigns) is the single most important source on war and politics from the late Northern Song through the mid-12th century, and includes material from diaries, private histories, and personal communications not otherwise available. On this invaluable text, see Yves Hervouet, ed., *A Sung bibliography (Bibliographie des Sung)* (Hong Kong, 1978), pp. 86-7.

³⁶ Hsü, *San-ch'ao pei-meng hui-pien* 71, pp. 537, 539.

³⁷ On the military role of eunuchs during the Sung, see Ch'ai Te-kuang, "Sung huan-kuan ts'an-yü chün-shih k'ao," *Fu-jen hsiieh-chih* 10 Nos. 1-2 (1941), pp. 187-225.

troops of the Sung military and were referred to as the "Western Troops" (*Hsi-ping*). During the reigns of Che-tsung and Hui-tsung the Sung military adopted a strategy of developing the borders, constructing fortifications, and gradually nibbling away at the territory of the Hsi Hsia. In this the Sung achieved considerable success and expanded its territory to the largest extent ever achieved by the dynasty. The Hsi Hsia armies stubbornly mounted counterattacks in spite of repeated defeats. It was not until 1119 with the major defeat of Sung forces and the death of the great general Liu Fa at the battle of T'ung-an (modern location unverifiable) that the Sung was finally compelled to arrange a cease-fire and negotiate peace with the Hsi Hsia.³⁸

Although the Sung's losses in the war with the Hsi Hsia were extensive, T'ung Kuan withheld from Emperor Hui-tsung the truth concerning the military situation and made false reports of military successes. This caused Emperor Hui-tsung to make inaccurate assessments of the real power of the Sung military. The emperor and Chief Councilor Wang Fu (1079–1126), along with T'ung Kuan, Ts'ai Yu (1077–1126), and others, decided on a policy of allying with the Chin dynasty of the Jurchen (1115–1234) in order to destroy the Liao and snatch back the Yen and Yün areas lost to the Khitans in the tenth century. Emperor Hui-tsung relied for the most part on the Western Troops commanded by T'ung Kuan and issued an order for them to concentrate themselves in Ho-pei and rotate with the Ho-pei Imperial Armies. In 1120 the large-scale Fang La rebellion (1120–1) suddenly and unexpectedly broke out in the southeast, and at a moment's notice Emperor Hui-tsung ordered T'ung Kuan to lead his Western Troops southward. Fang La's forces, which were vastly inferior to the Sung armies in terms of actual strength, were quickly destroyed. Most of the Liao territory had been occupied by the Chin dynasty in the meantime, but the Khitan forces in the remaining Liao territory fought ferociously like cornered wild beasts. T'ung Kuan twice launched attacks against the Liao in 1122, but on both occasions the Liao armies utterly defeated the Sung forces.

Seeing from these easy Liao victories the weakness and feebleness of the Sung military, the Chin in 1125 launched a major attack against the Sung. Although the Chin armies were composed of several different nationalities, their main force lay in the heavily armored Jurchen cavalry. The Jurchen

³⁸ The best overview of the late Sung wars in English is Ari Daniel Levine, "The reigns of Hui-tsung (1100–1126) and Ch'in-tsung (1126–1127) and the fall of the Northern Sung," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 5, Part 1: *The Sung dynasty and its precursors*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge and New York, 2009), especially pp. 614–43. In Chinese, see Chao Yung-ch'ün, *Chin-Sung kuan-hsi shih* (Peking, 2005), pp. 1–78. John Winthrop Haeger captures the drama of dynastic collapse in "1126–1127: Political crisis and the integrity of culture," in *Crisis and prosperity in Sung China*, ed. John Winthrop Haeger (Tucson, 1975), pp. 143–61.

cavalry excelled at archery, were subjected to severe military discipline, and fought intrepidly in fierce, all-out battles. It was the experience of the Sung military in fighting the Hsi Hsia that a single military engagement would determine victory or defeat, but defeats did not throw the Chin armies into chaos; instead, the defeated Chin forces were able to regroup quickly and continue fighting in several dozen or even a hundred or more engagements. The Chin armies were very skilled in field operations, but during their fight to the finish against the Liao they also learned how to lay siege to cities and utilize various types of complicated siege warfare machinery. In its confrontations with the Chin, an enemy stronger and larger than either the Liao or the Hsi Hsia, the corrupt Sung military was virtually unable to offer effective resistance and often scattered after engaging the enemy briefly or not at all. An exception was Wang Ping (d. 1126), a Sung general who organized stubborn resistance at T'ai-yüan, but the Chin armies ultimately captured the city after its provisions were expended and its reinforcements cut off. The Chin armies gradually occupied the areas of northern China after their capture of the Sung capital, K'ai-feng, in 1126. The north was the Sung's main stationing area for the imperial armies, and under attack by the Chin, most of these imperial army troops were defeated and scattered. Many of these scattered troops became bandits and roamed southward to various localities where they created serious problems and calamities for the people.

WEAPONS, LOGISTICS, AND TECHNOLOGY

Weapons production and the supply of horses

The Sung dynasty managed weapons production through the Armaments Section (*Chou-an*) of the Salt and Iron Monopoly Bureau (*Yen-t'ieh pu*) of the State Finance Commission (*San-ssu*), which was in charge of financial administration. During the reign of Shen-tsung, the Armaments Section was abolished and the Directorate for Armaments (*Chün-ch'i chien*) was specially established. After this there were other organs such as the Armaments Office (*Chün-ch'i suo*) that were responsible for this work.

Although the production of Sung weaponry proceeded by hand, its scale was very large and the division of labour in the handicraft factories was very detailed. The Northern Sung capital, K'ai-feng, was the most important base of weapons manufacture; there the Southern and Northern Workshops (*Tso-fang*) (later renamed the Eastern and Western Workshops) were established to produce weapons and body armour, while the Bow Workshop (*Kung-nu yüan*) and the Bow and Arrow Workshop (*Kung-nu tsao-chien yüan*) produced bows and crossbows. There was also a Siege Provisioning Workshop (*Kuang-pei*

kung-ch'eng tso) which specialized in producing machinery for laying siege to cities. During the early Northern Sung, there were 1,042 weapons makers in the Bow Workshop and 1,071 weapons makers in the Bow and Arrow Workshop, while there were 3,741 officers, soldiers, and craftsmen in the Southern Workshop and 4,190 officers, soldiers, and craftsmen in the Northern Workshop. The Southern and Northern Workshops were divided into fifty-one shops (*tso*), among which were the Wood Shop, the Horse Armour Shop, and the Sword-Sharpening Shop. The Siege Provisioning Workshop was divided into eleven shops, which included the Gunpowder Shop and the Petroleum ("Raging Fire Oil") Shop. In some important prefectures the Sung also established chief manufacturies (*tu-tso yüan*) to manufacture weapons. The Southern and Northern Workshops of the Northern Sung were able every year to produce 32,000 items of iron armour. The Bow Workshop was able to produce 16.5 million or more bows, crossbows, and arrows. The various [other] localities were able to produce 6.2 million or more bows, crossbows, and arrows every year.³⁹

During later Northern Sung times the Armaments Office had 3,700 weapons makers, while the Eastern and Western Workshops had 5,000 weapons makers. During the Southern Sung in 1114, the Armaments Office in Lin'an (Hang-chou) had more than 4,500 weapons makers, and 3,236,942 weapons of various types were manufactured in 1160.⁴⁰ Other places such as Chien-k'ang-fu (Chiang-ning-fu, modern Nanking) in Chiangnan-tung and Chiang-ling-fu (Ching-nan-fu) in Ching-hu-pei [also] had fairly large weapons industries.

Although gunpowder was on the scene during Northern Sung times, the Sung military used mainly non-gunpowder weapons, the most important of which were the bow and crossbow. During the Sung there was a heavy weapon called the frame-mounted crossbow (*ch'uang-tzu nu*), which required a crew of several dozen men and shot large arrows for very long distances. During Shentung's reign a type of strong-armed bow (*shen-pei kung*) was developed which was not as heavy and clumsy or unwieldy as the frame-mounted crossbow and required only one man to operate. This strong-armed bow continued in use until the Southern Sung period.⁴¹

³⁹ Shih Chi-kang surveys overall Sung arms production in his *Sung-tai chün-yung wu-tzu pao-chang yen-chiu* (Chengtu, 2000), chapter 3, pp. 148–201. For the Northern Sung, see Feng and Mao, *Pei-Sung Liao Hsia chün-shih shih*, pp. 134–52; for the Southern Sung, see Su P'in-hsiao, *Nan-Sung chün-shih shih* (Shanghai, 2008), pp. 82–105; and Han Chih-yüan, *Nan-Sung Chin chün-shih shih* in *Chung-kuo chün-shih t'ung-shih* (Peking, 1998), Volume 13, 5, pp. 144–65.

⁴⁰ SHY (1997) *Chih-kuan* 16, pp. 2726, 2727, 2729.

⁴¹ Wang, *Sung-ch'ao ping-chih ch'u-t'an*, p. 259. For a history of the bow and crossbow in China, see Joseph Needham and Robin Yates, *Military technology: Missiles and sieges*, Part 6 of *Chemistry and chemical technology*, Volume 5 of *Science and civilisation in China* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 101–83.

Important and enduring weak points of the Sung military included its lack of military horses and the backwardness of its cavalry.⁴² From mid-T'ang times onward, the governments of the Central Plains (*Chung-yüan*) had lost the horse-producing areas of the northwest, and the Sung's military horses came mainly through commerce with the minority peoples of the northwest. The number of horses the Sung bought every year usually ranged from 10,000 to 40,000 head. The Sung also established some directorates of horse pasturage (*mu-chien*) in the northwest, but they were ineffectively managed, the mortality rate among the horses was high, the horse breeds were inferior, and many of the horses were unsuitable for service as military mounts. Statistics from the Chen-tsung reign indicate that 200,000 or more horses were raised, and the statistical total from the Shen-tsung reign was 150,000 or more. These figures were far from records of the T'ang dynasty raising 700,000 horses. During the Shen-tsung reign, the *Pao-ma fa* and the *Hu-ma fa* (Household Horse Law) were implemented, with *pao-chia* and rich households being allocated to raise horses, but these measures were unable to make real improvements in the raising and breeding of military mounts.

Because of the loss of Shen-hsi, the Southern Sung could only increase its purchases of horses from the minority peoples of the southwest. During the Southern Sung the so-called northwestern horses (*ch'uan-ch'in ma*) and Kuang-nan-hsi horses (*Kuang-ma*) were purchased from Szechwan and Kuang-nan-hsi, with 10,000 northwestern horses and 1,500–3,000 Kuang-nan-hsi horses purchased annually.

Cavalry were the most awesome attack forces of former times. But organizing and training cavalry was hugely expensive. According to Sung calculations, maintaining one cavalryman was as expensive as maintaining five infantrymen. Most of the Sung rulers lacked foresight and did not put much store in building up cavalry forces. Often during the Northern Sung, 30 to 40 percent of cavalrymen were without mounts, and by Southern Sung times the proportion of cavalrymen was even smaller. This was an important reason for the Sung's failure to invigorate its military might.⁴³

Logistics and supply in the Sung military

During Sung times there were fairly strict distinctions between granaries (*ts'ang*), yards (*ch'ang*), and storehouses (*k'u*).⁴⁴ Granaries referred specifically

⁴² This has received extensive treatment by Paul Jakov Smith in *Taxing heaven's storehouse: Horses, bureaucrats, and the destruction of the Sichuan tea industry, 1074–1224* (Cambridge, MA, 1991), pp. 13–48. See also Shih, *Sung-tai chün-yung*, chapter 4, pp. 202–71; and Sogabe Shizuo, "Sōdai no basei," in his *Sōdai seikeishi no kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1974), pp. 64–144.

⁴³ Wang, *Sung-ch'ao ping-chih ch'u-t'an*, pp. 263–6.

⁴⁴ On Southern Sung military granaries, see Koiwai, *Sōdai heiseishi no kenkyū*, pp. 334–97.

to enclosed facilities for storing grain, yards were for open-air stockpiling of materials such as fodder or hay and were mostly for horse feed, and storehouses were used for stockpiling non-food supplies. The Sung did not usually establish specialized organs for military logistics; for the most part the various administrative levels of the government were responsible for logistics and supply during times of both peace and war. During the Southern Sung, four overseer-generalships (*tsung-ling*) were established in Huai-tung (*Huai-nan-tung*), Huai-hsi (*Huai-nan-hsi*), Hu-Kuang (Ching-hu and Kuang-nan circuits), and Szechwan, and were responsible for supplying funds and provisions to the Sung armies. At the Sung capital there were the Palace Archery Storehouse (*Nei kung-chien k'u*), the Armory for Uniforms and Armour (*Chün-ch'i i-chia k'u*), the Armory for Bows and Lances (*Chün-ch'i kung-ch'iang k'u*), the Armory for Crossbows and Swords (*Chün-ch'i nu-chien k'u*), and the Fodder Yard (*Ts'ao-liao ch'ang*), all of which were for storing military weapons and supplying animal feed.⁴⁵ However, the granaries (which went by various names) provisioned both military forces and government officials. In each locality there were granaries used jointly by the military and the civilian populace and others used only by the military. For example, there were the grand military granaries (*ta chün ts'ang*), grand military storehouses (*ta chün k'u*), military supply storehouses (*chün-tzu k'u*), armories (*chün-ch'i k'u*), armaments storehouses (*chün-bsii k'u*), and arsenals (*chia-chang k'u*). In Hsiang-yang (modern Hsiang-fan in Hupei) during the later Southern Sung period there were twenty-four military implements storehouses (*ping-ch'i k'u*).⁴⁶

During times of war, logistics and supply were mainly involved with provisions and fodder; weapons and the gold, silver, and cash used for rewarding military merit did not account for the main logistical efforts. The primitive transportation of premodern times made logistics and supply quite difficult, and on many occasions the military, unable to use carts and boats for transport, had no choice but to rely on manpower and animal power. According to Sung laws and regulations for food transport, camels were to carry three *tan* each,⁴⁷ while horses and mules were to carry 1.5 *tan* and donkeys one *tan*. According to the calculations of the famous Sung scientist Shen Kua (1031–95), if one soldier carried six *tau*⁴⁸ of food and three more food porters were added, there would only be enough food for thirty-one days. It can be seen that the extent of the mobilization of military forces during Sung times was in fact greatly constrained by logistics and supply. To make eating more convenient, military

⁴⁵ SHY (1997) *Chih-kuan* 22, p. 2860.

⁴⁶ Togto (T'o-t'o) et al., *Sung shih* (Peking, 1977) (hereafter *SS* (1977)) 417, pp. 12504–10.

⁴⁷ As a dry measure for grain, a *tan* (sometimes erroneously pronounced or written as *shih*) was roughly 120 to 160 pounds. As a measure of weight it amounted to about 110 pounds.

⁴⁸ A Chinese peck; ten *tau* were equivalent to one *tan*.

dry provisions of many different types were also manufactured during Sung times.

Every time a relatively large-scale military campaign was launched during Sung times, the people were unavoidably harassed and suffered greatly. Requisitioning large amounts of manpower, animal power, and cartage disrupted the agricultural cycle, and when able-bodied males were used up, even women were pressed into service. Large numbers of requisitioned men often starved to death or were killed during battles, and this led to many tragedies of scattered families, destroyed houses, and family members who perished.⁴⁹

The use and promotion of gunpowder weapons

Gunpowder is one of the four great inventions of premodern China.⁵⁰ While making medicines, Chinese alchemists gradually discovered that mixtures of sulphur, saltpeter (potassium nitrate), and carbon were highly combustible and had explosive properties. Records dating from the late T'ang and the Five Dynasties concerning black gunpowder are few and extremely brief. There are, however, several Sung records concerning black gunpowder. The Sung military classic entitled *Wu-ching Tsung-yao* (Essentials of the Military Classics) records three formulas for making gunpowder. Factories specializing in the production of gunpowder were erected in the Northern Sung capital of K'ai-feng. The explosive power of this primitive black gunpowder was not great, and it was used mostly as an ingredient for flame-producing weapons or as a means of dispersing smoke, lime, and poisonous gases. This gunpowder could only be used in combination with non-gunpowder weapons. The main weapon of the Sung military was the crossbow. The Northern Sung maintained strict secrecy over techniques of gunpowder production, but the Liao had obtained gunpowder-manufacturing technology by the reign of the Khitan emperor Tao-tsung (1032–1101, r. 1055–1101) at the latest and was training with gunpowder weapons at Yen-ching.⁵¹ The gunpowder weapons of this time were gunpowder bombs hurled by catapults operated by human muscle power. During its war of annihilation against the Liao, the Chin also obtained gunpowder technology. During the Chin's attack on the Sung, siege warfare was often conducted with a combination of gunpowder bombs and ballast stones hurled from catapults. The Liao, Sung, and Chin all organized

⁴⁹ Wang, *Sung-ch'ao ping-chih ch'u-t'an*, pp. 284–7.

⁵⁰ See Joseph Needham, "The epic of gunpowder and firearms," in his *Science in traditional China: A comparative perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 1981), pp. 27–56; and Peter Allan Lorge, *The Asian military revolution: From gunpowder to the bomb* (Cambridge and New York, 2008), chapter 1.

⁵¹ *HCP* (1979) 275, p. 6723.

catapult operators into special independent forces, and these were the first units of artillerymen in history.⁵²

The use of gunpowder weapons increased during the middle and late periods of the Southern Sung. After 1217 both the Sung and the Chin used iron gunpowder bombs in their wars with each other. These bombs were iron shells filled with gunpowder and were similar to modern artillery shells, but they were propelled by catapults. During the reign of Li-tsung (r. 1224–64), however, a “fire-emitting spear” (*t’u-huo ch’iang*) was invented which shot a projectile from a bamboo tube. This was a primitive barreled firearm. It was possible for more than 100,000 iron gunpowder bombs to be used in a single battle during this period. The Southern Sung navy was also equipped with gunpowder weapons. The naval battle at Chiao-hsi in 1161 was, in fact, the world’s first naval battle in which gunpowder weapons were used. This battle did not have an effect on the development of naval warfare techniques in later generations, but a few years later the Sung navy used gunpowder weapons at the battle of Ts’ai-shih on the Yangtze river.⁵³

THE MILITARY HISTORY OF THE SOUTHERN SUNG

The early Southern Sung

At the start of the Southern Sung the most pressing task for the court was the reorganization of military forces for resisting the Chin armies.⁵⁴ In 1127, after the accession of Emperor Kao-tsung (r. 1127–62), the Imperial Defense Command (*Yü-ying ssu*) was immediately established and run by chief councilors and executive officials who assumed the posts of commissioner (*yü-ying shih*) and vice commissioner (*yü-ying fu shih*) of the Imperial Encampment. Under them were appointed imperial defence command supreme commandants (*tu-t’ung-chih*), who managed the purely military matters. Under the supreme commandants the military forces were divided into left, right, front, rear,

⁵² Wang Tseng-yü, “Liao-tai Chin-tai te p’ao ho p’ao-ping,” *He-nan Ta-hsiieh hsiieh-pao* 4 (July 1989), pp. 87–94; Wang Yü-cheng, “Chung-kuo chung ku-p’ao k’ao-so,” *Chung-kuo shih yen-chiu* 4 (1993), pp. 20–30. See also Joseph Needham, “The guns of Khaifeng-fu,” *Historia Scientiarum* (Tokyo) 19 (1980), pp. 11–30; and Needham and Yates, *Military technology: Missiles and sieges*.

⁵³ See Peter Allan Lorge, “Water forces and naval operations,” in *A military history of China*, ed. David A. Graff and Robin Higham (Boulder, 2002), pp. 81–96.

⁵⁴ For the organization of the imperial armies in the early Southern Sung, see Wang, *Sung-ch’ao ping-chih ch’u-t’an* chapter 5, pp. 127–61; and Koiwai, *Sōdai beiseishi no kenkyū*, pp. 295–333. Huang Kuan-chung studies the relationship between imperial forces and the regional armies and local militias during the period in his *Nan-Sung ti-fang wu-li: Ti-fang chün yü min-chien tzu-wei wu-li te t’an-t’ao* (Taipei, 2002); he focuses more closely on the role of local ‘loyalist militias’ (*i-chün*) in defense against the Chin in *Nan-Sung shih-tai k’ang-chin te i-chün* (Taipei, 1988).

and central armies. The original Northern Sung institutions of the Bureau of Military Affairs and the Three Capital Guards fell temporarily into disuse. Chief councilor Li Kang (1083–1140) promulgated a military law with twenty-one provisions, the purpose of which was to systematize military discipline; increase the strength of the military; and put a stop to the harm brought about by imperial army troops who deserted in battle, fled to various parts of the nation, and worked the prevailing chaos to their own advantage.⁵⁵ After he was dismissed from his post as chief councilor, however, his twenty-one-provision military law existed in name only and was not seriously implemented.

The Imperial Defence Command was also unable to carry out strong leadership over the various armies. In 1130 the Southern Sung abolished the Imperial Defense Command and restored the old system of management of military matters by the Bureau of Military Affairs. But because the military situation was critical, chief councilors served concurrently as senior officials in the Bureau of Military Affairs for a considerable period of time. After several years of warfare, five main armies took shape in the Southern Sung. The force led by the commander Yüeh Fei (1103–42) became the largest and strongest, with a complement of over 100,000 troops. The main element or core of his army was the Tung-ching Regency Army (*Tung-ching liu-shou-ssu chün*), originally commanded by the civilian official Tsung Tse (1060–1128). This core element gradually expanded into a large and powerful army through recruitment and the incorporation of surrendered troops into its ranks. The designations of Yüeh Fei's army varied over time; it was first known as the Shen-wu Rear Army and later by such designations as the Rear Guardian Army for the Imperial Encampment, but among the common people it was called the "Yüeh Army" (*Yüeh-chia chün*). From his headquarters at O-chou (modern Wu-ch'ang and Wu-han, Hupei), Yüeh Fei officiated over the theater of war in the middle reaches of the Yangtze river.

The army of Wu Chieh (1093–1139), designated the Right Guardian Army for the Imperial Encampment, had as its main core or element the late Northern Sung's Shen-hsi Army. The Shen-hsi Army had stationed itself at the Szechwan–Shen-hsi border after Shen-hsi fell to the Jurchen, and in 1136 its military might totalled 68,449 troops. After Wu Chieh died of illness, the Sung court ordered the civilian official Hu Shih-chiang (1085–1142) to officiate over the military affairs of the Szechwan area, with the three

⁵⁵ There is a simple introduction to the twenty-one provisions of the early Southern Sung military system in Li Hsin-ch'uan, *Chien-yen i-lai hsi-nien yao-lu* (Shanghai, 2008) (hereafter *Yao-lu* (2008)) 6, p. 130. The provisions are recorded in considerable detail in SHY (1997) *Hsing-fa* 7, pp. 6747–8, but preserve only twenty of them; possibly one was omitted through oversight.

generals Wu Lin (1102–67), Yang Cheng (1098–1157), and Kuo Hao (1087–1145) commanding the troops and the army led by Wu Lin as the main force.

The army of Liu Kuang-shih (1089–1142), known by such designations as the Yü-ch'ien Hsun-wei Army and the Left Guardian Army for the Imperial Encampment (*Hsing-ying tso-bu chün*), was stationed in Huai-hsi. In 1127 its strength totalled 52,312 troops. Liu Kuang-shih was dismissed from office in that year, and Li Ch'ung (1104–53), one of the officers under his command, surrendered to the enemy along with forty thousand of his troops. With this the Left Guardian Army for the Imperial Encampment was basically destroyed.

The army of Han Shih-chung (1089–1151), with about 30,000 troops (80,000, according to one source), was known by such names as the Shen-wu Left Army and the Front Guardian Army for the Imperial Encampment, and was stationed in Huai-tung.

The army of Chang Chün' (1086–1154⁵⁶) ultimately had about 80,000 troops and was known by such names as the Shen-wu Right Army and the Central Guardian Army for the Imperial Encampment. Chang Chün's army was originally headquartered at Chien-k'ang-fu, but in 1137 Chang Chün' succeeded the dismissed Liu Kuang-shih, and hereafter Chang Chün's army was stationed in Huai-hsi.

The Three Capital Guards had long existed in name only, but later Emperor Kao-tsung once again renewed their military power. For the time being, however, the power of the Three Capital Guards did not compare with that of the five main armies discussed above.

These five main armies all utilized the organizational structures of armies, generalships, regiments, and companies. Yüeh Fei's army was composed for the most part of eleven armies, such as the Pei-wei Army. Each army had a commander-general and a vice commander-general. Under them were approximately eighty-four area generalships, each with a general, vice general, and reserve general (*chun-pai Chiang*).⁵⁷

⁵⁶ To be distinguished from Chang Chün' (1096–1164).

⁵⁷ Because of his prowess and his status as a patriotic martyr, Yüeh Fei has received by far the greatest scholarly attention of all five of the great early Southern Sung generals. In English, the major studies are Helmut Wilhelm, "From myth to myth: The case of Yüeh Fei's biography," in *Confucian personalities*, ed. Arthur F. Wright and Denis C. Twitchett (Stanford, 1962), pp. 146–61; and Edward Harold Kaplan, "Yüeh Fei and the founding of the Southern Sung" (diss., University of Iowa, 1970). In China, Wang Tseng-yü is the most prolific of the many historians to produce studies of Yüeh Fei. Many of his articles are collected in *Yüeh Fei ho Nan-Sung ch'ien-ch'i cheng-chih yü chün-shih yen-chiu* (K'ai-feng, 2002). For the structure of Yüeh's army, see *ibid.*, pp. 256–92, which reprints Wang's article "Yüeh-chia chün te ping-li ho pien-chih," from *Wen-shih* 11 (1981), pp. 115–22. Wang's many studies can be supplemented by Kung Yen-ming, *Yüeh Fei yen-chiu* (Peking, 2008).

At the beginning of the Southern Sung there was no choice but to strengthen the positions of military generals in order to defend against the Chin armies. The emperor and the civilian officials, however, feared that the power of the generals would become too great and thereby alter the traditional form of civilian politics and threaten the authority of the emperor. Among governing groups three divergent policies for dealing with the Chin existed: war, defensive posturing, and peace. For Emperor Kao-tsung, the most desirable policy had always been to seek peace; when peace could not be secured, he took defensive measures. His course of action in fighting the Chin was, then, one of passive resistance. Yüeh Fei submitted memorials criticizing this policy, but the emperor refused to order his commanders to launch a long-range offensive and secure a total victory in the war. Although the Sung's policies towards the Chin and towards the military generals were two different matters, they were actually closely intertwined with one another and became the two main political and military issues of the early Southern Sung.

In examining the course of the Sung-Chin war it becomes clear that between 1127 and 1128 the Chin armies had only occupied between ten and twenty prefectures and military prefectures; not even the transportation and communication lines leading to the Yellow River were controlled by the Chin.⁵⁸ During this time, Tsung Tse, the civilian regent of Tung-ching (Eastern Capital, K'ai-feng), became the central figure in the anti-Chin resistance. With his enormous prestige he devoted great efforts to uniting and organizing popular armed forces of several types in the north. He led the Tung-ching Regency (*Tung-ching lin-shou*) in beating back the savage attack launched by Chin armies from the winter of 1127 until the spring of 1128. After his death the Sung was for a time without a leading figure able to deal with the national crisis, and within two years most of the territory in the north had been lost to the Chin.

In 1129 the Chin armies launched an attack into regions south of the Yangtze river, but the terrain, climate, and densely distributed rice paddies of the south were inimical to the Jurchen's style of cavalry warfare. In 1130 the Chin armies were finally driven out of the regions south of the Yangtze by the forces of Han Shih-chung, Yüeh Fei, and others. With this the confrontation at the Huai river region between the Sung and the Chin became stalemated.

⁵⁸ For overviews of the Southern Sung wars from survival to rapprochement, 1127-42, see Tao Jing-shen (T'ao Ching-shen), "The move to the south and the reign of Kao-tsung (1127-1162)," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 5, Part 1: *The Sung dynasty and its precursors*, 907-1279, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge and New York, 2009), pp. 662-6 and 672-89; Han, *Nan-Sung Jin chün-shih shih*, pp. 180-254; Chao, *Chin-Sung kuan-hsi shih*, pp. 79-217; and Su, *Nan-Sung chün-shih shih*, pp. 131-77.

Some of the more talented Southern Sung military commanders gradually came up with effective military strategies for dealing with the Jurchen cavalrymen. These included the use of powerful bows and crossbows to defeat the heavy armor and archery of the Jurchen cavalrymen; the rotation of battle forces in order to overcome the fortitude and endurance of the Jurchen cavalrymen; and the widespread equipping of Sung infantrymen with anti-horse knives (*ma-cha-tao*), large axes, and other sharp weapons with which to attack the Jurchen horses. This last measure was effective because the Jurchen cavalrymen were not skilled in the use of swords in close-range combat. Yüeh Fei emphasized the development of Sung cavalry, and the cavalry forces of the Yüeh Army were able to hold their own on the plains against the Jurchen cavalrymen.

Between 1131 and 1134 the Chin armies launched three major offensives into Szechwan. During the second of these offensives the Chin achieved a temporary victory at Jao-feng-kuan (west of modern Shih-ch'üan in Shensi) but were ultimately forced to withdraw. During the other two offensives, Wu Chieh's forces met the Chin armies in battles at Ho-shang-yüan (near modern Pao-chi in Shensi) and Hsien-jen-kuan (south of modern Hui-hsien in Kansu) and inflicted serious damage on them. After the last of these defeats the Chin did not dare eye Szechwan again. From 1134 to 1136, Yüeh Fei's forces smashed the armies of Yang Yao that had taken up position at Tung-t'ing-hu (Lake Tung-t'ing) and had collaborated with the bogus Ch'i regime (1130-7) supported by the Chin. Yüeh Fei also launched two northward offensives and recovered the vast territories of Ching-hsi.

In 1140 war once again broke out between the Sung and the Chin. Sung forces under Liu Ch'i (1098-1162) waited in relative comfort at Shun-ch'ang-fu (Ying-chou, modern Fuyang in Anhwei) while the Chin troops exhausted themselves, and then the numerically disadvantaged Sung forces attacked and defeated the Chin forces. In a major northward expedition Yüeh Fei defeated Chin forces at Yen-ch'eng (in modern Ho-nan), Ying-ch'ang (*Ying-ch'ang-fu*, Hsü-chou, modern Hsü-ch'ang in Ho-nan), Chu-hsien chen (in modern Ho-nan), and other places and pressed on K'ai-feng, thus securing an unprecedented Southern Sung victory.

There was, however, an obvious flaw in the Sung military: command over the major armies was not uniform, and these armies could not work well together in battle. The Sung court preferred to allow the power of each of the major armies to act as a check on the others and was unwilling to turn uniform command of all these armies over to Yüeh Fei. Emperor Kao-tsung and Chief Councilor Ch'in Kuei (1090-1155) were of like mind concerning the two issues of restraining the power of the military and capitulating to the Chin for peace. In 1140 they forced Yüeh Fei to withdraw his forces, and in 1141

the three great generals Yüeh Fei, Han Shih-chung, and Chang Chün¹ were relieved of their commands.⁵⁹ The Sung court killed Yüeh Fei, proclaimed itself a vassal of the Chin, and in 1142 concluded a disgraceful peace agreement with the Jurchen.

The mid-Southern Sung

The military system of the Southern Sung was fixed, for the most part, after the Sung court relieved these three great generals. The Bureau of Military Affairs was made the highest military organ and was managed jointly by the chief councilors or by a consultative council of the chief councilors and senior officials of the Bureau. The Three Capital Guards no longer had jurisdiction over the Imperial Armies stationed in various areas of the Sung state, but they still did have control over three large armies stationed in the capital, Lin-an (Hang-chou).

The most powerful of the Three Capital Guards was the Palace Command (*T'ien-ssu*). The so-called Metropolitan Cavalry Command (*Ma-ssu-chün*) actually consisted mainly of infantrymen. During the Southern Sung ten palace armies were deployed in Szechwan and along the Yangtze river. The term "palace" or "before the emperor" (*yü-ch'ien*) denoted direct subordination to the emperor. The commanding officers of the palace armies were supreme commandants and vice supreme commandants. The thirteen armies mentioned above became the regular armies of the Southern Sung. In 1171 the Metropolitan Cavalry Command moved its headquarters to Chien-k'ang-fu (modern Nanking in Kiangsu), an area in which a palace army was already stationed. For this reason Chien-k'ang-fu became, along with Lin-an, a major area for stationing troops. The other nine palace armies were stationed in Mien-chou (modern Lüeh-yang in Shensi), Li-chou (modern Kuang-yüan in Szechwan), Hsing-yüan-fu (Liang-chou, modern Han-chung in Shensi), Chin-chou (modern An-k'ang in Shensi), Ching-nan-fu (modern Chiang-ling in Hupei), O-chou, Chiang-chou (modern Chiu-chiang in Kiangsi), Ch'ih-chou (modern Kuei-ch'ih in Anhwei), and Chen-chiang-fu (part of modern Kiangsu). Each of the thirteen major armies mentioned above implemented the organizational structure consisting of armies, generalships, regiments, and companies. An example is the palace army stationed in Chien-k'ang-fu, which was divided into Yu-i, Central, Left, Right, Front, and Rear Armies, each of which had a commander-general and two vice commanders-general. Each of these armies

⁵⁹ On the recentralization of military authority under Kao-tsung and Ch'in Kuei, see Huang Kuan-chung, "Ts'ung hai Han tao sha Yüeh: Nan-Sung shou ping-ch'üan te pian-tsou," in his *Nan-Sung chün-cheng yü wen-hsien t'an-suo* (Taipei, 1990), pp. 105-41; and Teraji Jun, *Nan-Sung ch'u-ch'i cheng-chih shih yen-chiu*, trans. Liu Ching-chen and Li Chin-yün (Taipei, 1995), chapter 7, pp. 207-40.

was in turn divided into five generalships, each one with a general, vice general, and reserve general.

During the Northern Sung a volunteer system (*hsiao-yung fa*) began to appear and be used on a small scale. During the reign of Emperor Shen-tsung the "brave volunteer system" (*yung-kan hsiao-yung fa*) was formally established, but the selection of volunteers was rather strict. From the late Northern Sung until the early Southern Sung, "volunteer" (*hsiao-yung*) gradually became a common designation for a higher classification of military personnel. During the Southern Sung two classifications were common in the regular armies: volunteers and ordinary soldiers (*chiün-ping*). Most of the volunteers were not tattooed on the face or arms, and the monetary portion of their military salary was twice that of the ordinary soldiers. During the reign of Hsiao-tsung (1162–89) the proportion of volunteers to ordinary soldiers was three to seven.⁶⁰ Most strong and healthy males were unwilling to serve as ordinary soldiers and instead wanted to serve as volunteers. In the busy and fluid world of military affairs, many volunteers and ordinary soldiers were promoted to positions as low-ranking officers, ranging from rank nine (*chiu-p'in*) to rank eight, upper-class (*cheng pa-p'in*) for military valor or merit. During the Sung such promoted men were called policemen (*shih-ch'en*). Because the number of officers and men in the Sung military was limited, many policemen were actually only able to be employed as common fighting men, with the one exception that their salaries were higher than those of the volunteers or ordinary soldiers. For this reason a three-tiered classification system of policeman, volunteer, and ordinary soldier took shape.

At the beginning of the Northern Sung much emphasis was placed on developing naval forces for the quelling of various states to the south. After this purpose had been achieved, however, there were no military areas associated with naval forces except for a few imperial army naval commanderies left over at K'ai-feng and Teng-chou (modern P'eng-lai in Shantung). During the Southern Sung water transportation was once again emphasized, and more than twenty naval units were deployed along the Yangtze and the coast. During the war between the Southern Sung and Yang Yao, both sides developed paddle-wheel ships propelled in the water by human muscle power. This technology made for faster navigation but could not be used out on the open seas. Naval forces played a major role in the Southern Sung's war with the Jurchen and later with the Mongols.⁶¹ The reserve forces of the Southern Sung

⁶⁰ Li Hsin-chuan, *Chien-yen i-lai ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (c.1202; Taipei, 1968), *chia* 18, pp. 277–8, "Chu chiün hsiao-yung." On the *hsiao-yung* volunteers, see Sogabe Shizuo, "Sōdai no kōyōhei," in his *Sōdai seikeishi no kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1974), pp. 294–310; and Wang, *Sung-ch'ao ping-chih ch'u-t'an*, pp. 118–22, 162–9.

⁶¹ Studies of the Sung navy include Lo Jung-pang, "The emergence of China as a sea power during the late Sung and early Yüan periods," *Far Eastern Quarterly* 14 (1955), pp. 484–503; Sogabe Shizuo, "Nan Sō

included the imperial armies, prefectural armies, local militia, local troops, and bowmen. Because the areas of the northwest had fallen into the hands of the enemy, the frontier tribal troops no longer existed. The area generalship and the non-area generalship imperial armies in the various localities of the south had already been downgraded to support troops comparable to the prefectural armies and were no longer used as regular armies.

War between the Sung and the Chin broke out once again between 1161 and 1164.⁶² The Chin emperor Wan-yen Liang (known posthumously as Hailing-wang, r. 1149–61) divided his troops into a four-pronged attack on the Sung and personally led a large force in an attack on the region south of the Huai river. He also organized an enormous fleet of ships to proceed southward along the coast with the intention of landing amphibious forces near Lin-an. The Sung naval commander Li Pao (d. c. 1165) led a small naval force northward along the coast and put it in place off the coast of Chiao-hsi (near Tsingtao in modern Shantung), where he easily annihilated the inept and inexperienced Chin naval forces. The forces personally led by Wan-yen Liang, however, defeated the main Sung forces south of the Huai river and closed in on the Yangtze. Using paddle boats and other effective naval weapons, the Sung civilian official Yü Yün-wen (1110–74) organized the scattered Sung forces and at Ts'ai-shih succeeded in beating back the Chin offensive. Because the combat effectiveness of the Southern Sung's infantry units in the eastern part of the empire had been seriously degraded by corruption in the military administration and the commanders' cowardice and ineffective leadership, they had no power to resist the Chin armies. The Sung had relied entirely upon its navy for the preservation of half the empire's territory.

Even while the infantry forces in the east were being scattered in defeat, the forces led by Szechwan Pacification Commissioner Wu Lin had recovered roughly half of the territory of Shen-hsi. In 1162 newly reinforced Chin forces engaged in fierce battle with Wu Lin's forces at Te-shun-chün (modern Chingning in Kiangsu), but the outcome of this confrontation was indecisive. The newly enthroned Emperor Hsiao-tsung heeded the suggestions of the civilian official Shih Hao (1106–94) and ordered Wu Lin to withdraw his troops. During their withdrawal the Sung troops were subjected to a surprise attack

no suigun," in his *Sūdai seikeishi no kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1974), pp. 249–71; and Su, *Nan-Sung chün-shih shih*, pp. 55–74. See, too, the section on the Sung navy in Angela Schottenhammer's chapter in this volume.

⁶² The 1160s wars are surveyed by Herbert Franke in Franke, "The Chin dynasty," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 6: *Alien regimes and border states*, 907–1368, ed. Herbert Franke and Denis C. Twitchett (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 239–43; and by Tao, "The move to the south and the reign of Kao-tsung," pp. 704–7; and Gong Wei Ai (Chiang Wei-ai), "The reign of Hsiao-tsung (1162–1189)," in *ibid.*, pp. 713–20. For more extended studies, see Han, *Nan-Sung Chin chün-shih shih*, pp. 255–87; Su, *Nan-Sung chün-shih shih*, pp. 178–91; and Chao, *Chin-Sung kuan-hsi shih*, pp. 218–72.

by Chin forces and suffered severe losses, and the half of Shen-hsi territory recovered by the Sung was once again lost. In 1163 the civilian official Chang Chün² (1096–1164) energetically advocated the use of military force against the Chin. He rashly organized the Sung armies in the eastern part of the empire as the main force for a northward expedition, but this was disastrously defeated by Chin forces at Su-chou (modern Su-hsien in Anhwei). Emperor Hsiao-tsung was forced to renegotiate peace with the Chin, but the Sung's humiliating designation as "vassal" (*ch'en*) vis-à-vis the Chin was abolished. Peace was thereafter maintained between the two states for more than forty years.

From 1206 to 1208, manager of important national security matters (*P'ing-chang chün-kuo chung-shih*) Han T'o-chou (1152–1207), in his efforts to extricate himself from his current political predicaments, credulously accepted reports of a Chin military setback in the north at the hands of the Mongols and of a poor Chin harvest in the south.⁶³ He rashly dispatched troops on a northward expedition before full preparations were made. The military might of both the Sung and the Chin during this time was declining; there was a widespread lack of combat effectiveness in the Sung palace armies and the Three Capital Guards, and most of the Jurchen had forsaken their militaristic inclinations and traditions of mounted archery and become the social parasites of the north. The Chiu⁶⁴ Army, which was composed of cavalymen from several nomadic nations, was in fact the only effective military unit that served as the main force of the Chin. Ultimately, however, the Sung did capitulate and sue for peace and endured the disgrace of being required to hand over to the Chin the head of Han T'o-chou in a box. Although the Chin armies were victorious, their military strength was greatly reduced, and this was later to have a negative impact on the Chin's real military power during its war with the Mongols.

The late Southern Sung

In 1207 Southern Sung chief councilors began to serve concurrently as military affairs commissioners, and this gradually became an established pattern.

⁶³ Richard L. Davis puts Han T'o-chou's "K'ai-hsi War" (so-called after the reign period of 1205–7) in historical context in "The reigns of Kuang-tsung (1189–1194) and Ning-tsung (1194–1224)," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 5, Part 1: *The Sung dynasty and its precursors*, 907–1279, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge and New York, 2009), especially pp. 789–96. See also Han, *Nan-Sung Chin chün-shih shih*, pp. 287–95; Su, *Nan-Sung chün-shih shih*, pp. 191–200; and Chao, *Chin-Sung kuan-hsi shih*, pp. 273–310.

⁶⁴ There is currently a controversy over the correct pronunciation of this character (a rare character which should be reproduced here: 𪛗); some maintain that it should be pronounced *chiu*, while others argue for *cha* or *yu*. See Wang Tseng-yü, *Chin-ch'ao chün-chih* (Pao-ting, 1996), pp. 102–6.

The Sung–Chin war of 1206–8 made obvious the degeneration of the quality of the Three Capital Guards Armies and the palace armies, and this, combined with the Wu Hsi (1162–1207) rebellion of 1206, which surprised and shocked both the government and the people, caused the Sung to strengthen gradually its system of civilian supervision or command of the military.⁶⁵ Civilian officials were appointed to such offices as military commissioner (*chih-chih shih*) and pacification commissioner (*hsüan-fu shih*) to preside over each major military theatre. With this the ten supreme commandants were, to all intents and purposes, stripped of their military and command authority. Moreover, new armies with many unit designations were organized in addition to the Three Capital Guards and the ten palace armies. The organization of these new armies was for the most part similar to that of the original thirteen armies. The troop strength of these new armies gradually increased until they became the main force of the Southern Sung's regular armies. The troop strength of the original thirteen armies continually decreased until they were nothing more than a small portion of the regular armies.

In 1217 the Chin dispatched troops in an attack on the Sung.⁶⁶ By this time the Chin had already lost a major portion of its territory to the newly ascendant Mongol armies and their fierce offensives and had moved its capital south to K'ai-feng. The Chin planned to expand to the south in order to compensate for its territorial losses in the north, and seventeen more years of continuous Sung–Chin conflict ensued. Because the Chin had lost its horse-producing regions in the north, it was forced to change from a cavalry-oriented army to an infantry-oriented one. The disintegrating Chin armies could not possibly have mounted a strong offensive against the Southern Sung, and Chief Councilor Shih Mi-yüan (1164–1233), the main political figure of the Southern Sung, had no intentions of launching a major attack on the Chin. The two states merely engaged in indecisive and militarily unimportant border clashes.

After the Sung's destruction of the Chin in concert with the Mongol armies in 1234, the Sung once again dispatched troops with the intention of recovering K'ai-feng (the eastern and main capital of the Northern Sung) along

⁶⁵ For sources on and a description of Wu Hsi's insurrection in Szechwan, see Davis, "The reigns of Kuang-tsung and Ning-tsung," pp. 796–805.

⁶⁶ For an overall survey of the late-Sung wars with the Chin and the Mongols and the fall of the dynasty, see Richard L. Davis's three chapters, "The reigns of Kuang-tsung (1189–1194) and Ning-tsung (1194–1224)," "The reign of Li-tsung (1224–1264)," "The reign of Tu-tsung (1264–1274) and his successors to 1279," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 5, Part 1: *The Sung dynasty and its precursors*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge and New York, 2009), especially chapter 12. For the final conquest of the Sung, see his *Wind against the mountain: The crisis of politics and culture in thirteenth-century China* (Cambridge, MA, 1996). Han, *Nan-Sung Chin chün-shih shih*, pp. 334–74; and Su, *Nan-Sung chün-shih shih*, pp. 200–65, provide useful overviews. In addition, see Ch'en Shih-sung et al., *Sung-Yüan chan-cheng shih* (Chengtu, 1988).

with the western capital at Loyang (in modern Ho-nan) and the southern capital at Ying-t'ien-fu (modern Shang-ch'iu in Ho-nan). The Sung troops were attacked and defeated by the Mongols, and with this began forty-five years of bitter Sung-Yüan warfare. In 1236 Mongol armies defeated Sung armies at the battle of Yang-p'ing kuan (near modern Ning-ch'iang in Shensi) and intruded into Szechwan, and with this the Southern Sung permanently lost the strategic roads and natural barriers of Szechwan. Thereafter a stalemated confrontation between the Mongols and the Southern Sung developed along the eastern borders and the Szechwan hinterland. The infantry-oriented Sung armies, which could not possibly have resisted the crack Mongolian cavalrymen in open field operations, utilized the mountainous and watery topography of southern China in giving full play to their special skills of defensive and naval warfare. In so doing the Sung armies offered the fiercest resistance the Mongol armies had ever encountered in their sweep through Europe and Asia, and the Mongols suffered enormous losses.

During 1237 and 1238 Mongol armies attacked Huang-chou (modern Huang-kang in Hupei), An-feng-chün (modern Shou-hsien in Anhwei), and Lu-chou (modern Hefei in Anhwei). The Sung general Meng Kung (1195–1246) and the civilian official Tu Kao (1173–1248) organized powerful resistance and inflicted such heavy casualties on the Mongol armies that they withdrew in defeat. After this Meng Kung was stationed in a defensive role at the Ching-hsi and Ching-hu-pei war theatres, and the civilian official Yü Chieh (d. 1253) organized defensive forces in Szechwan which effectively fended off Mongol armies. In 1258 the Mongolian Khagan Möngke (Xian-tsung, r. 1251–9) personally led a fierce attack on Tiao-yü-ch'eng (in modern Szechwan), and the Sung general Wang Chien (d. 1264) stubbornly defended the city. After Möngke died during this offensive the Mongol troops had no choice but to withdraw completely. After Khubilai (Shih-tsu of the Yüan dynasty, r. 1260–94) succeeded Möngke and proclaimed the Yüan dynasty, he employed the surrendered Sung general Liu Cheng (1213–75) to adjust the Mongols' military strategy. The direction of the Mongols' main attack was changed from Szechwan to Hsiang-yang and Fan-ch'eng (modern Hsiang-fan in Hupei). Instead of making strong, direct attacks on these cities, the Mongols adopted a strategy of protracted siege warfare.⁶⁷ Liu Cheng also trained a strong navy for the Yüan. His efforts and strategies bore fruit; in 1273 the two cities of Hsiang-yang and Fan-ch'eng, which had been under siege

⁶⁷ See Herbert Franke, "Siege and defenses of towns in medieval China," in *Chinese ways in warfare*, ed. Frank A. Kierman and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, MA, 1974), pp. 151–201; and Needham and Yates, *Military technology: Missiles and sieges*, pp. 218–23, which puts the tale of the Polo's participation in the siege of Hsiang-yang to rest.

since 1268, were captured. In 1274 Yüan armies proceeded eastward along the course of the Han river (*Han-chiang*) and conducted joint infantry and naval operations. They defeated Sung forces in battles at Yang-lo-pao (near modern Wu-han in Hupei), Ting-chia-chou (near modern T'ung-ling in Anhwei), Chiao-shan (north of modern Chen-chiang in Kiangsu), and other places. The Sung dynasty finally met its end at the battle of Yai-shan (at modern Hsin-hui in Kwangtung) in 1279.

CHAPTER 4

CHINESE LAW AND LEGAL SYSTEM: FIVE DYNASTIES AND SUNG

Brian McKnight

INTRODUCTION

The legal systems which reached maturity during the T'ang dynasty (618–907) profoundly affected the character of East Asian civilizations. Not only did T'ang legal compilations remain the foundations of later Chinese compilations, they also provided the models and often the substance for the legal compilations of Vietnam, Korea, and Japan. T'ang legal practice also stood as an example to which later Chinese officials often compared the legal practice of their own times. Among legal compilations the *T'ang code and commentary* (*T'ang-lü shu-i*) was of particular importance. Periodically revised during the early T'ang, the code (*lü*) reached its final form in the revision of 737.¹ This version, which has come down to us, exercised especially great influence on the law of later Chinese dynasties. However, Chinese legal evolution did not stop with the compilation of 737. Indeed, Chinese officials may have ceased to issue periodic revisions because the legal system was evolving too rapidly for the code to be kept abreast of it. Instead, during the late T'ang the authorities periodically issued compilations of edicts (*ch'ih*), arranged to facilitate consultation. This combination, of an inherited Code used in conjunction with collections of edicts during an era of rapid social and economic evolution, was the background for developments during the era of instability known as the Five Dynasties (907–60) which followed the collapse of the T'ang in 907.

FIVE DYNASTIES LAW

The fall of the T'ang did not lead to a disinterest in producing legal compilations. In late 909 the government of the recently founded dynasty of Later Liang (907–23) ordered a new editing of the various sorts of legal rules.

¹ The classic study of the T'ang Code and Commentary is that of Makino Tatsumi and Niida Noboru, "Ko Tō-ritsu-sogi seisaku nendai kō," *Tōbō gakubō* 1 (1931), pp. 121 ff. See also Niida Noboru, "Tambō hōritsu shiryō," *Tōbō gakubō* 5 (July 1935), pp. 51–8.

Slightly more than a year later the work was submitted under the title *Newly determined regulations, specifications, statutes, and ordinances of the Great Liang* (*Ta-Liang hsin ting ko shih lü ling*), and promulgated to the empire.²

Little more than a decade later the Later T'ang (923–36), having overthrown the Later Liang, again revised the legal codes. The legal writings inherited from the Later Liang were still in use in early 924, when the Censorate (*Yü-shih t'ai*) sent in a complaint about the effects of Later Liang laws on judicial process. Blaming the Later Liang pattern for delays in judicial process, and for an excessive severity in punishing economic crimes, the officials called for a revival of the laws of the T'ang dynasty. This memorial (*tsu-i*) was followed in the next few years by a flurry of editing activity, aimed not only at getting rid of vestiges of Later Liang law, but also at harmonizing rules partly inherited from the T'ang and partly derived from later enactments. These early efforts were followed in the early and middle 930s by another recompilation of laws.³

Officials under the Later Chin (936–47) followed the precedent of their predecessors in advocating a recompilation of received codes. During the first few years after the founding of the dynasty, there was continuing discussion of the advisability of retaining T'ang laws, or of producing new compilations. The Later Chin were at this time using collections of edicts from the Later T'ang, but subsequently produced their own.⁴

The short-lived Later Han dynasty (947–51) seems to have issued no new compilations, but the last of the Five Dynasties, the Later Chou (951–60), continued the pattern of issuing compilations. In the year in which the dynasty was established, a new set of collected edicts was completed, drawn from edicts issued under the Later Chin, the Later Han, and the Later Chou. Far more important historically was the compilation some six years later of the *Penal conspectus of the Great Chou* (*Ta Chou hsing-t'ung*). In the fifth month of 957 the Secretariat–Chancellery (*chung-shu men-hsia*) complained about the difficulty of using the current law compilations. At that time the Later Chou were reportedly using twelve chapters of statutes (*lî*), thirty chapters of statutes with commentary (probably the *T'ang code and commentary*), twenty chapters of specifications (*shih*), thirty chapters of ordinances (*ling*), thirty chapters of compiled edicts dating from the Later T'ang through the Later Han, and two compilations of materials from the T'ang dynasty – a ten-chapter collection

² Hsüeh Chü-cheng et al., eds., *Chiu Wu-tai shih* (hereafter *CWTS*) (974; Peking, 1976) 147, p. 1961; Wang P'u, *Wu-tai hui-yao* (hereafter *WTHY*) (961; Shanghai, 1978) 9, p. 146; Wang Ch'in-jo et al., eds., *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei* (hereafter *TFYK*) (1642 ed.; Shanghai, 1960) 613, p. 7a–b; Ma Tuan-lin, ed., *Wen hsien t'ung k'ao* (c. 1308; Shanghai, 1936) (hereafter *WHTK* (1936)) 166, p. 1442b.

³ *TFYK* 613, pp. 7b–16a; *WHTK* (1936) 166, p. 1442b–c; *WTHY* 9, p. 147; 10, p. 159; 20, pp. 333–4; *CWTS* 147, p. 1962.

⁴ *TFYK* 613, pp. 16a–18b; *WTHY* 9, p. 148.

of edicts compiled in the K'ai-ch'eng era (836–40) and a classified collection in twelve chapters from the Ta-chung era (847–59). The primary contribution of the editors, judging from the impact of their work, was to reduce the weight given to materials compiled in the later years of the T'ang or in the Five Dynasties. Their principal work, which formed the foundation for the later *Sung penal conspectus* (*Sung hsing-t'ung*), was basically a reissuing of the *T'ang code and commentary* of 737, with the addition of a few edicts dating from later periods. This compilation was not, of course, to be used in isolation, but in conjunction with the statutes, ordinances, regulations, and specifications.⁵

These various compilations were applied through a judicial structure which, superficially at least, remained loyal to its T'ang prototype. At the capital the three principal organs concerned with legal matters continued to be the Censorate, the Court of Judicial Review (*Ta-li ssu*), and the Ministry of Justice (*Hsing-pu*), a pattern which was to continue through the Sung dynasty (960–1279). On the trial court level, however, the impact of the political changes of the late T'ang period is more evident. The increased importance of military commanders, and of military jurisdictional units, is evident. Military inspectors (*chün-hsün shih*) and other officers were involved in judicial investigations, and military laws are mentioned with unusual frequency.⁶

In later historiography the Five Dynasties is seen as an era of excessive judicial abuses, heavier-than-usual punishments, and violations of accepted process. This vision reflects in part actual problems in the law, but it also reflects later historians' preconceptions that an era of decentralized and shifting politics, in which the military played a larger-than-usual role, must have been an abused and abusive age.

Review of death sentences was one facet of judicial actions where early in the Five Dynasties practice fell below standards set at the height of the T'ang. In 927 officials of the Later T'ang petitioned successfully for the reintroduction of the T'ang practice of deferring executions while a sequence of memorials asking for confirmation of death sentences was submitted to the throne. This practice, which dated from the early T'ang, apparently continued to be legally a prerequisite for executions for the remainder of the Five Dynasties.⁷

Later writers also complain of the excessive punishments and the tendency towards cruel treatment of prisoners characteristic of this era. General statements such as the comment by Ma Tuan-lin (1254–1323) that “[Later] Han law was harsh,” are accompanied by anecdotal accounts of individuals who

⁵ CWTS 147, p. 1964; WTHY 9, pp. 149–50; WHTK (1936) 166, p. 1443a–b.

⁶ T'FYK 613, p. 13a–b; 617, pp. 20b–21b; CWTS 147, pp. 1965, 1968–9; WHTK (1936) 166, p. 1442b–c.

⁷ T'FYK 613, pp. 9b–10a; WHTK (1936) 166, p. 1442b–c; CWTS 147, p. 1966.

were excessively severe in their handling of cases, and of the use of illegal tortures. Men were tortured with long nails or with knives, and in many instances they died as a result. During the Later Han the military officer who was in charge of security in the capital was said to have executed suspects without inquiry, sometimes "beating their mouths, cutting off their tongues, severing their tendons."⁸

Reports of these problems, however, are accompanied by reports which indicate a continuing concern about delays in procedure, orders for expediting cases, orders specifying the responsibility of the chief officials for interrogations, and a concern for the health of those being held in jails. Local medical practitioners were ordered to take care of prisoners who were ill, using drugs to be paid for out of state funds. There are repeated orders, especially during the summers, that cases be handled quickly so that prisoners not suffer illness or death from their confinement during this unhealthy period of the year. And rules were established to govern the use of judicial torture and to provide for investigations in cases where its use led to the death of prisoners.⁹

On balance it appears that the Five Dynasties justice may have been somewhat more severe than that of the late T'ang or the early Sung, but that the degree to which this was so has been exaggerated by later writers. The era which separated the fall of the T'ang in 907 and the establishment of the Sung in 960 saw both an increase in some cases of legal abuse stemming from the late T'ang, and the beginning of a trend towards the elimination of these abuses. The Sung thus inherited a legal tradition already in the process of divesting itself of some earlier problems and so was able to build upon a foundation already laid.

THE SUNG LEGAL SYSTEM

The laws

Chance raised Chao K'uang-yin (927-76) to the throne as the Emperor T'ai-tsu (r. 960-76); good judgment kept him there. Only the early death of the last Later Chou ruler had made possible the coup that brought the Sung to power. T'ai-tsu, aware of the important contributions to imperial stability that had been made by his Later Chou predecessors as well as the problems left unsolved, set himself the task of unifying the empire, while exploring further the institutional and policy reforms initiated by the Later Chou.

⁸ *WHTK* (1936) 166, p. 1442b; *CWTS* 147, pp. 1967, 1971.

⁹ *WHTK* (1936) 166, pp. 1442b-1443c; *CWTS* 147, pp. 1965-7, 1970-2; *WTHY* 10, pp. 159-60, 162, 164.

Conservative where possible, he was also capable of initiating bold changes where they were needed. But he and his successors were usually careful to preserve at least the outward semblance of continuity, even as they altered the inner workings of policies and institutions. The evolution of the Sung legal and judicial systems reflects both this desire for at least superficial stability and the willingness of those in power to adapt Sung practices to current situations.¹⁰

Both these traits are clearly reflected in the revision of the legal code that occurred early in the founder's reign. At the beginning of the Sung eight principal collections of laws were in use, four from the T'ang period, two from the Later T'ang, and two from the Later Chou, but the centerpiece of the legal system, and the chief source of penal rules, was the twenty-one-chapter *Ta Chou hsing-t'ung*, which had been put into practice in 958.

Complaints about this Later Chou compilation prompted T'ai-tsu to appoint a commission to revise the code. The commissioners began their work in the second month of 963, and six months later submitted the thirty-chapter *Sung penal conspectus* (*Sung hsing-t'ung*), also known as the *Chung hsiang ting hsing-t'ung*, the "Re-examined and redetermined collected penal laws." They were able to complete their labors in this short period because the recompilation merely involved making relatively minor alterations in the *Ta Chou hsing-t'ung*, deleting some edicts, adding a few others, altering some phraseology, and including commentaries and explanations.¹¹

Like the T'ang code which it closely resembles and from which it is indirectly descended, the *Sung hsing-t'ung* is divided into twelve sections: terms and general principles (*ming-li*), the imperial guard and prohibitions relative to the imperial palaces (*wei-chin*), administrative regulations (*chih-chih*), the

¹⁰ There is no well-integrated survey of the Sung judicial system, but the articles of Hsü Tao-lin (Hsu Dau-lin), which are gathered together in *Chung-kuo fa-chih shih lun-chi* (Taipei, 1975) touch on a number of aspects of Sung law. More broadly the chapters on the Sung in the old but still useful work of Yang Hung-lieh, *Chung-kuo fa-lü fa-t'a shih* (Shanghai, 1931; Taipei, 1967), pp. 553–646; and the even older work of Asai Torao, *Shina hōsei-shi* (Tōkyō, 1904), give traditional-style surveys of the period. The articles collected in Niida Noboru's *Chūgoku hōseishi kenkyū*, 4 vols. (Tōkyō, 1959–64), also contain many insightful but scattered comments on Sung law. In more recent studies, Kuo Tung-hsu, *Sung-tai fa-chih yen-chiu* (Pao-ting, 1997); Tai Chien-kuo, *Sung-tai fa-chih ch'u-tan* (Harbin, 2000); and Wang Yün-hai, *Sung-tai ssu-fa chih-tu* (K'ai-feng, 1992), all contain several sections that bear indirectly on our topic.

¹¹ Tou I et al., eds., *Sung hsing-t'ung* (Taipei, 1964) (hereafter *SHT*). The fullest report on this compilation is found in Lü Tsu-ch'ien, *Huang-ch'ao wen-chien* (*Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* (hereafter *SPTK*) ed.) 63, p. 1b ff. See also Wang Ying-lin, *Yü-hai* (1806 *Chiang Ning Fan Shu* ed.) 66, p. 20a ff.; Hsü Sung et al., eds., *Sung hui-yao chi-kao* (Taipei, 1964) (hereafter *SHY* (1964)) *hsing-fa* 1, p. 1a; Li Tao, *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien* (Taipei, 1965) (hereafter *HCP* (1965)) 4, p. 16a. The classic study of the *Sung hsing-t'ung* is that included in Makino and Niida, "Ko Tōritsu sogi seisaku nendai kō," pp. 121 ff. See also Niida, "Tambō Hōritsu Shiryō," pp. 51–8.

family and marriage (*bu-hun*), government stables and treasuries (*chiu-k'ü*), unauthorized corvée levies (*shan-hsing*), violence and theft (*tsei-tao*), conflicts and suits (*tou-sung*), deceptions and frauds (*cha-wei*), miscellaneous statutes (*tsa-lü*), arrests and escapes (*pu-wang*), and trial and imprisonment (*luan-yü*). The *Sung hsing-t'ung* differs from the T'ang code principally in that it includes some later laws appended to the pertinent sections. Both works are compilations of penal rules, in the sense that (except in the opening sections on general principles) statements of prohibited behavior are usually followed by an indication of the penalty associated with their infraction. This body of penal rules was referred to as *lü*, the "code." Its history in Sung times exemplifies the Sung penchant for retaining policies and institutions in name while changing actual practice. The *lü* of the *Sung hsing-t'ung* remained nominally in force throughout the dynasty. In fact the government issued an enormous number of edicts which modified the *lü*, so that in many areas of law these *ch'ib* supplanted the *lü* which remained hallowed but ineffectual.¹²

In addition to these penal rules the Sung authorities made use of a number of other sorts of law. Like the T'ang, the Sung used administrative regulations called *ling*, which were prescriptive rather than proscriptive. Unlike the *lü* these administrative rules did not specify how someone who failed to comply with them would be punished. During the early part of the Sung the *ling* inherited from earlier times continued in use, but under the second emperor they were edited to eliminate anachronistic titles and names, and thereafter they were re-edited on several occasions.¹³

Rules of a third type were called *ko*. During the T'ang this word had been used for edicts and collections of edicts which amended the code, but in the Sung it seems to have referred solely to certain restricted sorts of rule which established quotas, such as numbers of personnel or clerks; determined amounts of goods or money, as in systems of rewards; fixed standards, such as those for the lengths of mourning leaves for officials; and so on. In short, during the Sung *ko* or "regulations" always had something to do with measurements of quantity or level.¹⁴

¹² For this reason a major source of information on legally effective rules is the collection of documents, largely edicts and approved memorials, called the *Sung hui-yao chi-kao* or *Collected Sung documents* (SHY). On this work, see T'ang Chung, *Sung hui-yao yen-chiu* (Shanghai, 1932). See also Niida Noboru, "Eiraku Taitenbon 'Sō Kai Yō' to sono naka no sho hōten," in Niida Noboru, *Chūgoku bōseishi kenkyū*, Volume 4: *Hō to kanshu: Hō to dōtoku* (Tōkyō, 1964), pp. 114-23.

¹³ On Sung legal compilations, see Sogabe Shizuo, "Sōdai no hōten rei," *Tōboku Daigaku Bungakubu kenkyū nempō* 15 (1964), pp. 1-48; Brian E. McKnight, "From statute to precedent: An introduction to Sung law and its transformation," in *Law and the state in traditional East Asia: Six studies on the sources of East Asian law*, ed. Brian E. McKnight (Honolulu, 1987), pp. 111-32.

¹⁴ There are many examples of Southern Sung (1127-1279) *ko* preserved in Hsieh Shen-fu et al., eds., *Keigen jōbō jirui* (1195-1200; Tōkyō, 1968), which include rules determining such things as the numbers of

The fourth kind of Sung rule, also not represented by a separate law category during the T'ang, specified the "what," often of physical objects. Any of the extant examples sets down formats for official communications. A second large group sets down the specifications for objects with ritual significance, including palace buildings, official and royal carriages, funeral paraphernalia, decorative flags, and so on. Another, much smaller group is reminiscent of *ko* in that it specifies numbers, such as quotas of school students, their stipends, and similar matters. This type of rule, in the Sung called *shih*, suggests that they almost all were concerned with processes of communication, either with other men or with the non-human world.¹⁵

Although these four sorts of rules differed in nature, they had all originally been created in much the same way (at least in theory) – by the granting of imperial assent to a rule. Such approved rules were often first issued in the form of edicts. Since these embodied the will of the sovereign, they naturally overrode and amended previous legislation unless they stated otherwise. Edicts normally were promulgated because it had become clear that past practice for some reason was not fitted to present circumstances. In an era like the Sung, during which great social and economic change was accompanied by increasing administrative sophistication and a centralization of authority, edicts were issued in large numbers. Under such a system the legally binding rule was embodied in the latest pertinent expression of the imperial will (*sheng-chih*). Therefore, law-finding consisted of going backwards through the accumulated edicts. The legal compilations would be examined only if there was no later edict covering the matter in hand. Obviously, as time passed, officials would find it increasingly difficult to ferret out the proper ruling. To alleviate this problem the government periodically ordered the editing and compiling of the accumulated edicts. The editors sought to eliminate duplications, idiosyncratic or temporary orders, and other edicts which did

attendants and personnel attached to offices or officials, the amounts of supplies to be given out, the degrees of rewards for difficult service or merit, time periods for reinstatement in office, numbers of questions in examinations (*k'o-chü*), etc. This connection of *ko* with quantitative measures may have begun very early. See, for example, an order of 1007 that the "Regulations (*ko*) on rewards for merit to be given to military officers be sent up." *HCP* (1965) 66, p. 12a.

¹⁵ For the *shih* of Sung times, see Brian E. McKnight, "Patterns of law and patterns of thought: Notes on the specifications (*shih*) of Sung China," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 102 (1982), pp. 323–31. We have two large collections of Sung rules, most of which presumably fall into the category of *shih*. Li Chieh, *Li Ming-chung's method of architecture (Ying-t'sao fa-shih): A descriptive booklet with sample folios* (1103; Shanghai, 1930), is a collection of the building specifications used in constructing imperial buildings. There is also a set of ritual rules, Cheng Chü-chung, *Cheng-ho Wu-li hsün-i (Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen ed.)*, which I feel are for the most part *shih*, although some are *ko*. Unfortunately none of the rules is assigned to its category in the work itself.

not fit with broader policy, so that the resulting compilations would be of manageable size.¹⁶

During the hundred-odd years from the founding of the dynasty to the accession of Shen-tsung (r. 1067–85), of the dozens of legal compilations issued, seven were of collected edicts (*p'ien-ch'ih*) potentially applicable in many offices or local areas (called “generally applicable edicts”). Such compilations were arranged according to the divisions of the *Sung hsing-t'ung*, with the edicts apparently being given in chronological order under the appropriate division. In addition there were also numerous compilations of edicts which applied only to a limited group of offices or to limited areas.¹⁷

Under Shen-tsung the accumulation of legislation provoked a series of changes in the formats and methods of compilation. These changes, as modified by Shen-tsung's immediate successors, created the system which was characteristic of the Southern Sung. Rules were no longer organized according to the divisions of the *Sung hsing-t'ung*, but rather (in the generally applicable compilations) according to their subject, such as the organization of officialdom, the civil service recruitment system, taxes and labor services, criminal justice, and so on. Such broad subjects would be subdivided, and within each subdivision the rules set down in a fixed order, beginning with those rules having associated penalties (*ch'ih*), administrative rules (*ling*), quantitative rules (*ko*), specifications (*shih*), and sometimes explanatory edicts (*shen-ming*).¹⁸

There is one major extant example of this type of compilation, a collection of material, titled the *Clauses from the legal system of the Ministry of Personnel* (*Li-pu t'iao-fa*), which is invaluable for the study of southern Sung administrative law. This work, compiled in the 1260s, was the last in a sequence of recom compilations of personnel rules. Makino Tatsumi concluded that the original collection was divided into thirty major sections. Only three, those

¹⁶ See McKnight, “From statute to precedent.” See also SHY (1964) *hsing-fa* 1, p. 2a; HCP (1965) 43, pp. 14a–15a; 220, p. 19a; Wang, *Yü-hai* 66, pp. 23a–24b; Yang Chung-liang, *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien chi-shih pen-mo* (Taipei, 1967) 16, p. 4a–b.

¹⁷ HCP (1965) 20, p. 21a; 36, p. 8a; 43, p. 14a; 45, p. 11b; 61, p. 10a; 87, p. 14b; 90, p. 1b; 96, p. 16b; 113, p. 4a; 160, p. 2b; 201, p. 1a; 241, p. 3b; SHY (1964) *hsing-fa* 1, pp. 1b–6a; T'ogto (T'o T'o) et al., eds., *Sung shih* (Peking, 1977) (hereafter *SS* (1977)) 204, pp. 5139–45; Wang, *Yü-hai* 66, pp. 22a–23a, 24b–26a, 27a–b, 29a–b, 31b, 32a. We are told explicitly that the compilation of 1032 was divided into twelve sections according to the pattern of the T'ang code (and the *Sung hsing-t'ung*). SHY (1964) *hsing-fa* 1, p. 4b. The compilation of 1047 followed this pattern. HCP (1965) 160, p. 2b. No other compilation explicitly states that the arrangement of the T'ang code was followed, but this clearly seems to be suggested by the division of the compilations of 998 and 1062 into thirteen sections, apparently twelve sections plus a one-chapter table of contents. SHY (1964) *hsing-fa* 1, p. 2a; Wang, *Yü-hai* 66, p. 31b.

¹⁸ SHY (1964) *hsing-fa* 1, p. 9a; p. 12b; p. 26a; HCP (1965) 385, pp. 7b–8b; 484, p. 19b; 511, p. 3b; 514, p. 1b; Wang, *Yü-hai* 66, p. 35b.

on “promotions” (*kuan-sheng*), on “changing office” (*kai-kuan*, i.e. being promoted from administrative to capital/court class), and on case review (*mo-k'an*), have been preserved. In addition to information on personnel matters, some editions include incidental but important evidence bearing on other matters, such as legal definitions of family relationships.¹⁹

The most important single source for the study of the Southern Sung legal system, the *Classified legal clauses effective in the Ch'ing-yüan era* (*Ch'ing-yüan t'iao-fa shih-lei*), is organized in a variant of this format. Compiled early in the thirteenth century and based on the earlier *Ch'ing-yüan ch'ih ling ko shih*, this work originally had eighty chapters, of which thirty-six are now extant. There are sections on officialdom, the civil service system, documentary processes, proscribed and monopolized goods, taxes and labor services, agriculture and sericulture, Buddhists and Taoists, clerks, criminal justice, commutations, sumptuary and ritual affairs, tribal groups, and stock-raising. Within each section the materials are arranged with the penal rules first (*ch'ih*), followed in order by the regulations (*ling*), ordinances (*ko*), specifications (*shih*), and explanatory edicts (*shen-ming*). Some of the rules involved date from as early as 1084, and the latest are from the early thirteenth century, but the majority appear to be from the twelfth century.²⁰

The increasing mass of laws, which in Shen-tsung's reign had provoked the reforms that led to the *ch'ih-ling-ko-shih* format for compilations, may also have been instrumental in encouraging the increased use of precedents (*li*) characteristic of the late Northern Sung (960–1127) and the Southern Sung. Precedents – that is to say, putative imperial decisions concerning particular cases or incidents which might be cited by later decision-makers – had been used in pre-Sung times. During the Northern Sung precedents were used in general administration, economic policy, the civil service system, ritual systems, postal administration, and the criminal law. Those used in the criminal law are perhaps closest to precedents as that term is employed in Anglo-American jurisprudence. In the late Northern Sung judges began to cite judgments in particular cases by the review units headquartered in the

¹⁹ The *Li-pu t'iao-fa* has been partially preserved in the *Yung-lo ta-tien* (*Yung-lo encyclopedia*). On this work, see Makino Tatsumi, “Eiraku taitenbon Sō ribu jōhō ni tsuite,” in *Ichimura Hakushi koko kinen Tōyō Shi ronshō*, ed. Ichimura Hakushi koko kinen Tōyōshi ronshō kankokai (Tōkyō, 1933), pp. 1087–1110. See also Niida Noboru, “Eiraku taitenbon Sōdai hōritsu sho ni shō,” in Niida Noboru, *Chūgoku hōseishi kenkyū*, Volume 4: *Hō to kanshū, hō to dōtoku* (Tōkyō, 1964), pp. 160 ff.

²⁰ Hsieh et al., *Keigen jōbō jirui*. On this work, see Niida Noboru, “Eiraku taitenbon keigen jōhō Jirui ni tsuite,” in Niida Noboru, *Chūgoku hōseishi kenkyū*, Volume 4: *Hō to kanshū, hō to dōtoku* (Tōkyō, 1964), pp. 155–9; Makino Tatsumi, “Keigen Jōhō jirui no Dō-Shaku mon: Sōdai shukyō hōsei no ichi shiryō (Jō),” *Shūkyō kenkyū* 9 No. 2 (1932), pp. 64–84; 9 No. 4 (1932), pp. 44–58; Werner Eichhorn, *Beitrag zur rechtlichen Stellung des Buddhismus und Taoismus im Sung-staat: Übersetzung der Sektion “Taoismus und Buddhismus” aus dem Ch'ing-Yuan T'iao-fa Shib-Lei* (Ch. 50 und 51) (Leiden, 1968).

capital as legal grounds for subsequent decisions. When so many precedents had accumulated that they became difficult to use, the authorities appointed commissions to edit and compile those deserving use.²¹

In addition to collections of various types of law, Sung authors produced other sorts of legal writing for the use of officials and prospective officials. Continuing a tradition which began as early as the Han (206 BC–AD 220), they compiled a number of collections of cases. We have the names of several collections now lost, but the earliest of the extant Sung collections is the *Mirror for deciding cases* (*Che-yü kwei-chien*) by Cheng K'o (b. 1081), who flourished about 1130. Cheng K'o is said to have drawn his materials from various sources, standard and nonstandard. The original work had twenty chapters, but the currently available book of that name has only eight. The case reports in the "mirror" are brief and would have served acting officials largely by suggesting devices for gathering and assessing facts rather than in the making of legal decisions.²²

More famous is the *T'ang-yin pi-shih* by Kuei Wan-jung (fl. 1195–1224), which has been ably translated into English by Robert van Gulik under the title *Parallel cases from under the pear tree* (*T'ang-yin pi-shih*). Kuei Wan-jung borrowed ideas and material from the *Collection of difficult cases* (*I-yü chi*) by the Five Dynasties authors Ho Ning (898–955) and Ho Meng, and the *Mirror for deciding cases* of Cheng K'o. In all, his work contains 144 cases, divided into seventy-two pairs, joined together because they demonstrate the same reasoning or method of detection. Like the cases in the *Mirror* the reports are brief, and would have been of more use as guides to ways of eliciting and interpreting facts than as a help in reaching decisions.²³

Administrative handbooks are another source of information about Sung legal and judicial practice. Of the half-dozen extant works that have the character of administrative guidebooks, by far the most useful for students of law is the *Self-admonitions for local administrators* (*Tso-i tzu-chen*) by Li Yüan-pi (d. 1117). Unlike most of the other handbooks of this period, which offer general personal advice to local officials, the *Tso-i tzu-chen* describes in detail many sorts of legal procedure, and (in chapters 5 through 10) provides models

²¹ *HCP* (1965) 5, p. 13b; 6, p. 7b; 51, p. 9b; 55, p. 12a; 67, p. 12a; 76, p. 8b; 79, p. 10a; 90, p. 16b; 117, p. 11b; 127, p. 6a; 140, p. 1a; 246, p. 14b; 254, p. 13a; 375, p. 17b; 391, p. 5a–b; 508, p. 10a; 435, p. 11b; 432, p. 12a; 497, p. 19b; *SHY* (1964) *hsing-fa* 1, pp. 6a, 8a–b, 9a, 13a, 18a, 29b, 30a; Wang, *Yü-bai* 66, p. 32b.

²² There is no proper study of the *Mirror for deciding cases* (*Che-yü kwei-chien*), though it is described briefly in the work of Robert van Gulik (see following note) and in Yves Hervouet, *A Sung bibliography* (*Bibliographie des Sung*) (Hong Kong, 1978), pp. 237–8.

²³ Robert van Gulik, trans., *T'ang-yin Pi-shih: Parallel cases from under the pear tree: A 13th century manual of jurisprudence and detection* (Leiden, 1956). See also Hatano Taro, "To-in Hi-ji no Sho-hon ni tsuite: To-in Hi-ji genryü kō," *Yokohama shiritsu daigaku ronso* 2 No. 3 (October 1950).

for drawing up many sorts of official document, contract, and so on. It is a key source for understanding low-level administrative practice in this era.²⁴

Another legal text, important not only for what it reveals of Sung law but also for its role in later Chinese jurisprudence, is the text on forensic procedures known as the *Collected writings on the washing away of wrongs* (*Hsi yüan chi lu*) by Sung Tz'u (1186–1249). Completed in 1247, the *Washing away of wrongs* is a handbook for those officials who were assigned the task of holding inquests on homicides and certain other deaths or near-deaths. Although Sung Tz'u made use of a number of earlier sources, his seems to be the first specifically forensic text written anywhere, pre-dating the works of Fortunato Fedele and Paolo Zaccia in Europe by almost three centuries. From its first appearance in the thirteenth century down to the end of the empire in the twentieth, this book was the standard reference on the subject. The earliest extant version, derived from an edition of Yüan (1260–1368), runs to about eighty pages in its most recent reprint. This version has sections covering administrative regulations on inquests, general advice to coroners, techniques for examining corpses of different sorts, dozens of sections suggesting ways of determining cause of death and of separating premortem from postmortem injuries, formulas for preparations which can help reduce unpleasant odors, and prescriptions and techniques for saving those near death.²⁵

The sources previously described deal mostly with administrative or criminal laws. Material for understanding legal problems of the kind we call civil is less abundant. However, for the Southern Sung this gap is partly filled by the extant portion of the *Collection of lucid and equitable judgments* (*Ming-kung shu-p'an Ch'ing-ming chi*). Although there is a Ming fourteen-chapter version of the book which was published in 1987, the extant four chapters from an original Sung edition that was published in Japan are used here. Those chapters, which deal with the family and marriage, are divided into twenty-two subcategories such as "inheritance," "disputes over valuables," "marriages," and so on, which provide us with invaluable materials for understanding landholding, family relations, and business dealings. The nature of the work is indicated in the title. *Shu-p'an* are written judgments, though not necessarily court decisions. Extant T'ang examples indicate that in that era *shu-p'an* were artificial and

²⁴ A brief description of this work can be found in Hervouet, *Sung bibliography*, p. 171.

²⁵ For a translation of the earliest extant version of this work and a general description of Sung inquest practices, see Brian E. McKnight, trans., *The washing away of wrongs: Forensic medicine in thirteenth-century China* (Ann Arbor, 1981). There are also a number of translations of later versions of this work. See C. F. M. de Grijjs, *Genergtelijke geneeskunde: Uit Chinese verstaald* (Batavia, 1863); Ernest Martin, *Exposé des principaux passages contenus dans le Si-Yuen Lu* (Paris, 1884); Herbert Giles, "The 'Hsi yuan lu' or 'Instructions to coroners,'" *China Review* (1874); reprinted in *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 27 (1924), pp. 59–107.

literary exercises. Fortunately, in the Sung, judgments reflected actual practice. In the current version of the *Ch'ing-ming chi* there are 117 judgments by a number of eminent Southern Sung officials, which record not only the facts of the cases but also the final decisions, the relevant rules, and the legal reasoning used.²⁶

The police system

Most of the rules compiled in these ways applied principally if not exclusively to the behavior of people closely associated with the government – officials, members of the imperial family, clerical workers, and so forth. The law compilations described above ordinarily touched the lives of the people closely at only two points, through the fiscal regulations (which are dealt with in other sections of this volume) and the criminal law, with its associated police system.

On the lowest level, responsibility for law and order fell on the local people themselves and on the drafted village officers who served as local leaders and as functionaries of the state administration. Under Sung (and T'ang) law, people were required to intervene and seize those guilty of certain serious crimes such as battery, robbery, rape, and so on. (However, this same rule says that people might be punished if they intervened in less serious matters, which ought properly to be reported to the authorities for official action.)²⁷

Local people were also organized into household groupings which not only served as tax collection and militia units but also as units for mutual security and crime prevention. There were a variety of such grouping systems, of which the *pao-chia* system is the best known. All might take on police functions. Members were expected to report criminals or military deserters and might be called on to serve in rotation as constables.²⁸

²⁶ On this work, see I. R. Burns, "Private law in traditional China (Sung dynasty)" (diss., Oxford University, 1973); and Niida Noboru, "Eiraku taitenbon 'Shin-mei ki' ni tsuite," in Niida Noboru, *Chūgoku Hōseishi kenkyū*, Volume 4: *Hō to kanshū, hō to dōtoku* (Tōkyō, 1964), pp. 437 ff. See also the postfaces by Niida Noboru and Nagasawa Noritsune to the anonymous *Meikō shōhan seimeishū* (Tōkyō, 1964); and Niida Noboru, "Sin-Mei Ki Ko-kon-mon no kenkyū," *Tōbō gakubō* 4 (1934), pp. 115–89. The Ming version was published as Anonymous, *Ming-kung shu-p'an Ch'ing-ming chi* (1261; Peking, 1987) (hereafter CMC). On Sung civil law in general, see Niida Noboru, *Tō-Sō hōritsu bunshu no kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1937).

²⁷ Ch'ang-sun Wu-chi et al., eds., *T'ang-lü shu-i* (Taipei, 1970) (hereafter TLSI) 4, pp. 59–60; SHT 28, pp. 5b–6b.

²⁸ Wen Chun-t'ien, *Chung-kuo pao-chia chih-tu* (Shanghai 1939); Lin Jui-han, "Sung-tai pao-chia," *Ta-lu tsa-chih* 20 No. 7 (April 1960), pp. 13–19; Matsui Hitoshi, "Ō An-seki no ho-ko ho," *Keisai kenkyū* 7 No. 1 (1923), pp. 24–43; Higashi Ichio, *Ō Anseki shinpō no kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1970); Asami Shozo, "Sōdai ho-ko sei ni kansuru kenkyū," *Shien* 8 No. 1 (1938), pp. 35–70; Sogabe Shizuo, "Ō An-seki no ho-ko ho," *Tōboku Daigaku nempo* 8 (1957), pp. 1–45; Ikeda Masashi, "Ho-ko ho no seiritsu to sono tenkai," *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 12 No. 6 (January 1954), pp. 1–32.

These aggregations were led by village officers who were usually drafted from among the more well-do-do local people. During the Northern Sung the village officer in charge of rural law and order was the elder (*ch'i-chang*), who was assisted by unpaid drafted assistants called stalwart men (*chuang-ting*) drawn from the ranks of the less well-to-do. Elders were supposed to help in the suppression of banditry, the settling of minor disputes, firefighting, the maintaining of roads and bridges, and the promotion of agriculture.²⁹

During the late Northern and the Southern Sung the place of the elder was often taken by an officer called the superior security group head (*tu-pao cheng*), who was held accountable for the investigation of crime and the apprehension of brigands, military deserters, and illegal salt dealers. He was aided by his assistant (*tu-pao fu-cheng*) and at times by officers called large security group heads (*ta-pao chang*).

Above the village level the Sung employed a tandem civil-military apparatus for law enforcement in rural areas. The Sung founder had inherited a system in which civil authority on the county level had been almost entirely displaced by military authority. Police matters were mostly handled by the garrison commanders (*chen-chiang*), subordinates of the regional commandants (*chieh-tu shih*). T'ai-tsu was fully aware of the problems this posed for central power, and began to reassert civil prerogatives even while he whittled away at the functions of the local military. In 962, on the advice of the head of the Bureau of Military Affairs (*Shu-mi yüan*), he ordered that each county establish a county sheriff (*hsien-wei*) with a salary equal to that of the county registrars (*chu-pu*), though sheriffs stood below the registrars in the protocol order. These sheriffs, assisted by a body of clerks (*chieh-chi*) and bowmen (*kung-shou*), were to enforce the law in the countryside. The garrison commanders retained control only over disorders in the garrison's environs.³⁰

However, although T'ai-tsu sought to bridle the power of the garrison commanders, he also recognized that to suppress serious disorder in rural areas local authorities might well have to use military force. He therefore emphasized the police role of military officers called patrolling inspectors (*hsiün-chien*). These officers differed from the garrison commanders in a number of critically important ways. First, they were law-enforcement officers pure and simple, having no administrative or judicial authority. Second, they were

²⁹ On these practices, see Brian E. McKnight, *Village and bureaucracy in Southern Sung China* (Chicago, 1971). See also Fei Hai-chi, "Sung-tai chih li-cheng chi so ch'ien-she chih chu wen-t'i," *Ta-lu tsa-chih* 30 No. 11 (1965), pp. 14-17; Kawakami Koichi, "Sōsho no risho kocho kicho," *Tōyō gakubō* 34 Nos. 1-4 (March 1952), pp. 61-76.

³⁰ Many of the extant memorials and edicts dealing with the post of sheriff can be found in *SHY* (1965) *chih-kuan* 4, pp. 60a-93a.

stationed either at prefecture capitals or at strategically located forts (*chai*) in the countryside.³¹

Initially the jurisdictions of these patrolling inspectors were larger than those of the sheriffs. The lowest-ranking might be responsible for several counties. The most powerful might control as many as ten prefectures. However, during the first century of the Sung their numbers increased as their jurisdictions (in general) shrank in size, so that by the late eleventh century they seem to have become merely military, and rurally based, counterparts of the civil and town-based sheriffs, with whom they shared the task of suppressing banditry and illicit trade in monopoly goods.

The increase in the numbers of patrolling inspectors was presumably due to increasing rural disorder, and the apparent inability of the sheriffs to handle the resulting problems. The state tried various devices to promote the effectiveness of its police agencies. Various penalties were set up for those who failed to report lawlessness. In the eleventh century, the state also ordered the responsible officials to conduct regular monthly tours of rural areas. Registers were established which recorded the dates and places visited. In its fully developed form there seems to have been a system of three sorts of record: a register carried by the patrolling inspector and the sheriff which was signed and dated and countersigned by the village officers of each rural unit, a sealed register kept by the village officers themselves which the sheriff or patrolling inspector had to sign, and public whitewashed walls on which the dates of the visits of the law-enforcement officials were recorded. Except when traveling on their monthly tours, sheriffs were allowed to go into rural areas only in response to specific problems. Aside from actual pursuit of bandits, perhaps the key problem with which they dealt was the need for forensic examinations and inquiries when deaths in unusual circumstances were reported.³²

As the chief civil investigation and police functionary in the county, the sheriff was the official of choice for inquests on corpses or injured persons. Although inquests were a regular part of Chinese police procedure from Chin (1115–1234) times, they reached their full premodern development only under the Sung. The basic Sung regulation on this question, issued in the year 995, specified that in all cases of killing or injury the county was to send out a sheriff (or the prefecture a police inspector, *ssu-li ts'an-chün*) to conduct an inquest. If the cases merely involved death from injury or disease, this initial report would suffice. However, if a prisoner had died, or the death suggested the possibility of foul play or was unusual in other ways, after the first inquest a

³¹ Sogabe Shizuo, "Sōdai no jun-ken ken-i to shōan seisaku," *Shien* 92 (1964), pp. 165–75. For some of the edicts and memorials on patrolling inspectors, see *SHY* (1964) *chih-kuan* 48, pp. 122a ff.

³² McKnight, *Washing away of wrongs*, chapter 2.

report would be sent to the prefecture, which would send an official to conduct a re-inquest.

The inquest process normally began when someone came to the county yamen and reported a mysterious death or a serious battery. The report, written out by clerks, was first sent to the magistrate, who sent it on to the office of the sheriff. Following officially prescribed specifications, clerks then prepared a form which gave the names of the official handling the inquiry, his attending clerks, the assistant who would perform the actual forensic examination, the names of the village officers and other local parties, and the place in question and its distance from the yamen. By law the inquest official had to proceed quickly to the site, interview the local people, and preside over a forensic examination of the corpse. In the fully developed system as it existed during the last years of the dynasty, the information so gathered was recorded in triplicate on forms printed by the office of the circuit judicial intendant (*chih-lu*). At the close of the examination one copy was sent to the intendant, one was given to the bereaved family, and one was kept for county use. The report at this time also included dorsal and ventral outlines of the corpse, on which the mortal wounds were indicated. These outlines, like the report form itself, were signed by the local people involved to certify their agreement that the information contained was accurate. Finally, at this late period the inquest official might well have had as a guide the world's first text on forensic examinations, the work called the *Collected writings on the washing away of wrongs* (*Hsi-yüan chi-lu*) (preface date 1247).

The trial system

Written evidence such as that produced by an inquest played a major role in the Sung trial process. As in all societies, many, perhaps most, potentially litigable disputes were resolved without formal state intervention, but a great many ended up in court, which in Sung China meant in the first instance the yamen of the county magistrate (*chih-hsien*).³³

³³ On the Sung trial system, see Miyazaki Ichisada, "Sō-Gen jidai no hōsei to saiban kiko – Gentenshō seiritsu no jidaiteki, shakaiteki haikai," *Tōbō gakubō* 24 (1954), pp. 115–226; Hsü Tao-lin (Hsü Dau-lin), "Sung-ch'ao te hsien-chi ssu-fa," *Tung-fang tsa-chih* 6 No. 2 (March 1972), pp. 19–28; Hsü Tao-lin, "Sung lu chung te shen-p'an chih-tu," *Tung-fang tsa-chih* 4 No. 4 (November 1970), pp. 18–28; Hsü Tao-lin (Hsü Dau-lin), "Separation between fact-finding (trial) and law-finding (sentencing) in Sung criminal proceedings," *Sung Studies Newsletter* No. 6 (October 1972), pp. 3–19. On the structure of judicial administration, see Kobayakawa Kingo, "Godai oyobi Sō ni okeru shiho seido," *Hogaku ronso* 42 No. 5, 6 (1939), pp. 73–111; 43 No. 4 (1940), pp. 88–118. Charles Hartman has explored in detail the process of a Sung trial with his work on the Crow Terrace case against Su Shih. See his "Poetry and politics in 1079: The Crow Terrace poetry case of Su Shih," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* (CLEAR) No. 12 (December 1990), pp. 15–44; and "The inquisition against Su Shih: His sentence as

The arrested suspect would ordinarily be brought to the county town and held in the jail attached to the office of the magistrate. The county magistrate or other officials might question him informally, but the clerical personnel attached to the jail seem to have been the agents chiefly responsible for interrogating prisoners. In gathering the information the officials in charge of the investigation also made widespread use of spies and paid informers. In this they were supported by an elaborate system of state rewards for information on criminal acts.

Disposition of the cases after this preliminary investigation varied depending on the seriousness of the charges. County magistrates could investigate, try, sentence, and punish crimes calling for beatings with the heavy rod or less (the second-lightest penalty in the traditional Five Punishments, *Wu-hsing*). In more serious cases the county magistrate was supposed to carry out an initial investigation, propose an appropriate sentence, and then transfer all materials and the accused to the prefecture for formal trial. The large number of references to the trial process at the prefectural level indicates that the county inquiry may have been largely pro forma, or that the accused may have been sent on to the prefecture without even a pretense of a county investigation.

At the trial, whether in the county or the prefecture, the witnesses, the accuser, and the accused were interrogated on the basis of the complaint. The judge was not allowed to fish around for other crimes not mentioned in that document. If those interrogated were not forthcoming, they might be put to the question. Sung references to the beating of witnesses are scarce, but the sources deal at length and in detail with the use of judicial torture in examining accused persons. According to Sung law, if the accused refused to confess despite strong evidence against him, the presiding judge might have him beaten. Such judicial flogging was applied most often in the more serious criminal cases, which were tried on the prefectural level. The presiding judge there would ordinarily be a subordinate official and not the chief administrative officer. Therefore, before the flogging, this judge had to inform his superior and solicit his countersignature on the request for permission to apply torture. Furthermore, in most instances it was expected that this flogging would be administered in the presence of other prefectural officials.

The conditions for these interrogations were set by law. The rod used, for example, was three feet five inches long, with a diameter of two inches at the

an example of Sung legal practice," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113 No. 2 (1993), pp. 228-43. Lau Nap-yin's (Liu Li-yen) recent works, especially "I-t'iao lü-wen ko-tzu chieh-tu: Sung-tai 'cheng-an' te cheng-i," *Chung-yang yen-chiu-yüan li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so chi-k'an* 73 No. 1 (March 2002), pp. 119-64, also throw light on these problems. See also a number of items in *Sung-Yuan shih-tai te fa-lu ssu-hsiang bo she-hui* (Taipei, 2001) which he edited.

wide end and nine-tenths of an inch at the narrow end. There were to be no more than three such interrogations and the total number of blows was not to exceed two hundred. Sessions were to be held at least twenty days apart, with no subsequent beatings to be administered until the wounds from the previous session had healed. However, despite these (and other) rules restricting and defining judicial torture, there is abundant evidence that illegal tortures were used with some frequency. And even when the beatings were applied according to the letter of the law, the accused criminals often died.³⁴

After the accused had made a final oral statement to the examining magistrate, presumably acknowledging his guilt, the prisoner wrote it out or, if illiterate, dictated it to a clerk.

This statement, which was first read to the judge, generally had to be confirmed by other officials, who questioned the prisoner to verify that his verbal statements agreed with the written confession. This confirmation completed the trial, or fact-finding, stage of the judicial process.

When both these procedures were completed, the officials gathered together to hear the verdict. At this meeting the prisoner was brought in and listened to a recitation of the whole case record. After hearing it he was expected to sign the documents to indicate his acceptance of the accuracy of the record and the fairness of the verdict.

During the Sung this trial stage was followed by a separate law-finding procedure, conducted by a functionary other than the examining judge. The most common general term for these functionaries was "law-searching official" (*chien-fa kuan*). In the prefectures this duty fell to the "judicial inspectors" (*ssu-fa ts'an-chun*), and in the counties to the clerks of the archive-secretariat (*pien-lu ssu*). At first the duties of these functionaries were intended to be largely of a clerical nature. They were merely to locate and submit to the magistrate in charge the various provisions of the laws which were relevant to the instant case. They were explicitly forbidden to comment on the case itself. In practice, however, their decisions largely determined further disposition of the matter. From at least the late eleventh century the Sung government recognized this, referring to the law-finding officials as "officials who search and sentence" (*chien-tuan kuan*), while their superiors, who were nominally in charge of disposition, were termed "countersigning officials" (*ch'ien-shu kuan*).³⁵

³⁴ There is no adequate study of judicial torture in the Sung. For some information on it, see *WHTK* (1936) 166, pp. 1446, 1452, 1453, 1454-5.

³⁵ On the review processes described in this and the following paragraphs, see Hsü Tao-lin (Hsü Dau-lin), "Sung-ch'ao hsing-shih shen-p'an chung te fu-ho Chih," *Tung-fang tsa-chih* 7 No. 1 (July 1973), pp. 22-30; Hsü Tao-lin (Hsü Dau-lin), "T'ui-k'an k'ao," *Tung-fang tsa-chih* 7 No. 3 (September 1973), pp. 24-32; Hsü Tao-lin (Hsü Dau-lin), "Fan-i pieh-k'an k'ao," *Tung-fang tsa-chih* 6 No. 3 (August 1972), pp. 20-8.

In theory the functions of the trial magistrate and the law-finding officer were to be independent. The two officials were forbidden to consult together concerning unsettled cases. Nor were men serving in one such capacity to be appointed concurrently to the other. In practice such concurrent service seems to have occurred, though rarely. Far more common was the practice of consultation concerning pending cases. To avoid later remanding of the case by higher review authorities, it was important that the crime statement which concluded the investigatory phase of the case be phrased in such a way that it could be matched unambiguously with a set of appropriate laws. To assure that this would be so the trial magistrates would often meet with the law-finding personnel to rewrite the final crime statement so that no criticisms could be made by higher authorities.

However, if the accused renounced his previous confession, or refused altogether to accede to the crime statement, or if his family brought charges of judicial abuse, an automatic retrial followed. Since magistrates tried only minor crimes, which were not ordinarily subjected to confession verification, most retrials occurred at the prefectural level. A peculiarity of Sung local administration, the existence on the prefectural level of three (or sometimes four) separate courts, greatly simplified this procedure, because when retrial followed renunciation of confession or refusal to confess it was not ordinarily necessary to have an outside official sent in from another jurisdiction. The case was merely transferred from one unit to another.

Ordinary prefectures had a prefectural court (*chou-yüan*) headed by an executive inspector (*lu-shih ts'an-chün*), an on-duty office (*tang chih-ssu*) headed by a staff supervisor (*p'an-kuan*) or a prefectural judge (*t'ui-kuan*), and a court of the police inspector (*ssu-li ts'an-chün*). In superior prefectural (*fu*) capitals there were two such police inspectors' courts (of the right and the left), and in two of the four imperial capitals two courts of the military inspectors (also divided into the right and the left) (*tso yu chün-hsün yüan*).

We do not now know why cases were assigned to one of these courts rather than another for their initial trial. However, the records suggest that in most instances cases were first sent to the court of the police inspector. The prefectural court occasionally functioned as a court of first instance, but most often it, like the on-duty court, served as a retrial organ.

Refusal to confess or material discrepancies between the case record and the prisoners' verbal statements at the time of the confession verification seem to have led only to intra-prefectural retrials. However, if the prisoner or his family claimed that the accused had suffered judicial abuse the case had to be retried either in a new jurisdiction or by an outside official dispatched by superior authorities.

For these protective devices to operate, either the prisoner or his family had to protest or at least refuse to co-operate. In addition, however, there were a

variety of passive protective devices incorporated into Sung procedures. One, automatic review of serious cases at higher levels, has already been touched upon. Under Sung law the county judge could only fully dispose of cases calling for beating with the heavy rod or less. More serious cases were usually tried at the prefectural level. These prefectural trials were themselves subject to automatic review if they resulted in sentences of exile or death. Such cases passed to the offices of the circuit intendants. Many cases, including capital cases, stopped at the circuit level, but if they involved mitigating circumstances or if there were doubtful points of fact or law they were sent on to the capital. The usual procedure in the capital review of such cases was for them to go first to the Court of Judicial Review, which reviewed them and sent them on to the Ministry of Justice. The ministry could make final determinations on cases calling for exile (*liu*), but cases calling for the death penalty were sent for further scrutiny to the Secretariat–Chancellery, and then to the emperor for his endorsement. If the Court of Judicial Review or the Ministry of Justice felt that the case presented problems, they could apply for imperial permission to remand it for retrial. (It should be noted that although there were occasional changes in the patterns of disposition of these cases, the basic principle, that several central offices should separately review serious sentences, was generally followed.)

The Sung also enacted a variety of other devices designed to ferret out judicial abuses. The judicial intendants, for example, were expected to make periodic inspections of the government units under their jurisdiction, during which they interviewed prisoners. The intendants' offices also received regular periodic reports on cases being handled by subordinate jurisdictions. If they uncovered apparent problems, they might ask the unit involved to reopen the matter, or they might dispatch an investigator from another of their subordinate units to conduct a separate enquiry. They might even change the venue of a case if they felt circumstances justified such a serious move.

These functions of the intendants' offices are in fact merely specific instances of a more general underlying rule, that anyone in the government hierarchy had the duty to bring apparent injustices to light. What varied with level in the hierarchy were the responses of these officials. Whereas subordinates were generally restricted to submitting petitions, superiors usually had three options, to remand the matter for reconsideration by the original officials, to assign a new investigator either from the original unit or from another one, or to conduct an inquiry themselves. To encourage officials to ferret out abuses, the Sung authorities established several systems of rewards. These systems were coupled with the principle that time was no bar to reopening cases which had been improperly handled. Together these provisions meant in general that cases long settled could be resurrected, and in particular that when an official

was found guilty of crimes an investigation might be launched into his past settlement of legal matters to see if he had been guilty of hitherto undetected abuses. All these policies were designed, at least in part, to protect innocent parties from suffering injustice and to spy out abusive or incompetent officials, but, of course, they were themselves open to misuse and often led to serious delays in settling cases. The classic example from Sung times is the case of Ah Yun, a woman accused of having killed her betrothed, betrothal in Sung law having the same legal effect as marriage itself. During the investigation she confessed, so there was no question of her guilt, but appropriate sentencing raised several complicated issues. Ah Yun's mother had arranged the betrothal during a period of mourning for her deceased husband. Under Sung law, a girl could not be legally betrothed during such a mourning period. One group of officials argued that the betrothal was void and that Ah Yun should be tried for homicide involving unrelated persons (which would carry a lesser penalty). The confession and its impact on sentencing also posed problems. In traditional Chinese law, under many circumstances confession would result in a lessening of punishment. Although Ah Yun had confessed to the crime, there was an issue of timing. Ah Yun had not confessed until the investigation had commenced. Had the confession been offered early enough in the investigating process to be admissible as a circumstance that would mitigate punishment? Officials were bitterly divided over these arguable issues of law. In addition, the case became entangled in the partisan politics of the reign of Shen-tsung, and dragged on for years, despite several explicit imperial orders that the case had been finally disposed of and was not to be raised again.³⁶ On balance, however, we must credit the Sung authorities with having established perhaps the most elaborate set of safeguards known in imperial China; the degree to which these safeguards actually functioned effectively is a question which must await much further research.

The penal system

In its penal practices, as in so many other areas of governmental activity, the Sung state continued older systems in name, while altering their meaning in

³⁶ On the A Yun case, see Hsü, "Sung-lu chung te shen-p'an chih-tu," p. 24; Helmut Wilhelm, "Der Prozess der A Yun," *Monumenta Serica* 1 (1935-6), pp. 338-51; Albert I. Borowitz, "Strict construction in Sung China: The case of A Yun," *American Bar Association Journal* 63 (April 1977), pp. 522-8. For a convenient assembly of major documents, see Shen Chia-pen, *Chi-i wen-ts'un* (Taipei, 1976) 4, pp. 15b-23b. Su Chi-lang (Billy K. L. So or So Kee-long) has written a number of important pieces on the famous Ah Yun case, which reflects many of the same concerns. See especially his "Shen-tsung chao Ah Yun an pien-cheng," in Su Chi-lang, *Tang Sung fa-chih shih yen-chiu* (Hong Kong, 1995), pp. 149-77; and "The case of A Yün: A textual review of some crucial facts," *East Asian Library Journal* 7 No. 2 (1994), pp. 41-71.

practice, and placing alongside them new usages anomalous to the inherited pattern which remained nominally in use. The result was a bewildering complexity of practices which is as yet not fully understood.

In theory, the Sung continued to employ the T'ang system of the Five Punishments. As set forth in the *Sung hsing-t'ung* of 963, these were (1) beating with the light rod in five degrees from ten blows to fifty blows, (2) beating with the heavy rod in five degrees from sixty to one hundred blows, (3) penal servitude in five degrees from one to three years, (4) exile in four degrees (2,000, 2,500, and 3,000 *li*, plus exile with added labor), and (5) execution by strangulation or beheading.³⁷

Almost immediately after this system was adopted, it was transformed by the law for conversion of punishments of 963. Under this law beatings with the light and heavy rod, penal servitude, and exile were all converted into beatings with the heavy rod. The nominal penalty of ten or twenty blows with the light rod became in practice seven blows with the heavy rod inflicted on the buttocks; thirty and forty blows became eight blows; fifty blows became ten blows; sixty blows of the heavy rod was reduced in practice to thirteen blows, seventy to fifteen, eighty to seventeen, ninety to eighteen, and one hundred to twenty; while one year of nominal penal servitude became thirteen blows of the heavy rod administered on the back; one and a half years became fifteen blows on the back, two years became seventeen blows, two and a half years became eighteen blows, and three years became twenty blows. Those nominally exiled to 2,000 *li* were in fact to be beaten on the back seventeen blows and to do penal labor for one year, for 2,500 *li* the equivalent was eighteen blows and a year of penal labor, for 3000 *li* it was twenty blows and a year of penal labor, and for exile with added labor the penalty was twenty blows and three years of penal labor.³⁸

If the Sung authorities had practiced this system, or if they had abandoned it entirely, the problem of understanding their penal usages would not be unduly difficult. However, they did neither. For some kinds of delict and at some times the authorities made use of the penalties outlined above. For a great many other crimes they used a system we may broadly refer to as registration, which included patterns of penal servitude. To this they added a new death penalty (slicing). And then, to complicate matters further, they made use of the old nominal categories of penalty as abstract units when, for example, they were discussing commutations or reductions of punishment.

³⁷ *SHT* 1, p. 1a ff. For a general description of Sung penalties in theory and in practice, see Miyazaki, "Sō-Gen jidai no hōsei to saiban kiko," pp. 122 ff.

³⁸ *WHTK* (1936) 166, p. 1444; *HCP* (1965) 4, pp. 6a-7a.

Of these changes the one which introduced the least confusion into the Sung system was the addition of the new death penalty – slicing (*ling-ch'ih*) – a punishment that involved the dismemberment of the criminal. The punishment seems to have ranged from actual dismemberment while the criminal was still alive, to making a series of symbolic but superficial cuts before execution, apparently at times followed by postmortem dismemberment of the corpse. The earliest reference to the use of “death by slicing” is usually traced to the treatise on law in the *Liao history* (*Liao-shih*), and there is evidence of its use in the late Five Dynasties. Under the Sung its use was first advocated in 1011, but it was not approved until 1028. Thereafter it came to be a regular penalty for certain heinous crimes such as treason; “great subversion” (*ta-ni*); sedition; the murder of senior family members; some other types of homicide; and, at some times in some places, banditry. It seems to have remained in use until the end of the dynasty.³⁹

Registration was another practice which grew out of the conditions of the late T'ang and the Five Dynasties, when rapid economic and social change was accompanied by political instability. With the final collapse of the T'ang in 907, the problem of maintaining order was posed in a particularly acute form. Rulers of the Five Dynasties responded by issuing increasingly harsh laws. Some of these applied to older, more traditional delicts, but many were aimed at suppressing the violations of those governmental controls by which the state sought to exploit the burgeoning economy. Crimes against property and violations of state regulatory legislation were punished with especial harshness. During this era and in the succeeding Sung period the practice grew up of assigning penalties by imperial edict, either to specific cases or to classes of crime.⁴⁰

The men so punished were registered with the army, which used them as laborers. A convict would be sent for registration to a jurisdiction whose distance was set by law, and while he would not only do forced labor, he would also have to live in army barracks. He might or might not be tattooed. Such army registration has led to the common but mistaken impression that the Sung army was made up in substantial part of criminals. In actual practice young, able-bodied criminals were inducted for use as soldiers during certain periods of military crisis, but during most of the dynasty criminals were listed on separate registers and were used solely to do labor. They were not given

³⁹ Brian E. McKnight, “Sung Justice: Death by slicing,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 93 No. 3 (1973), pp. 359–60.

⁴⁰ For the most convenient assemblage of source materials on registration, see SHY (1964) *hsing-fa* 4, pp. 1a ff.

military training, much less weapons. The crimes for which such criminals suffered registration ranged from very trivial ones (which could entail punishments as minor as beating with the heavy rod) where the sentences were increased in severity because of the serious circumstances involved, to capital crimes where the punishment was reduced to registration. In addition to this general form of registration, the Sung also had distinct systems which might be used in punishing officials guilty of crimes. These men were also sent to distant places, but they seem to have been free of penal labor in some instances and might not have had to live in army barracks.

After being registered in special units of the army, the men punished by penal registration were transferred to jurisdictions at differing distances from the site of conviction. The severity of the punishment could be adjusted by changing the distance to which the convict was sent. Thus the lightest degree called for confinement in a neighboring prefecture, heavier degrees called for more distant places of confinement, and the heaviest sentences involved confinement in especially uncomfortable or dangerous regions. While being held in the army camps, the men so punished served in various ways as laborers.

Although occasionally Sung reformers did suggest the use of prisons as a form of punishment, and although at times some prisoners were given credit for time already spent in jail, the Sung authorities, like those in most other traditional dynasties, did not usually consider time spent in jail as a type of punishment. And yet the Sung did make widespread use of such a penalty, registration that we might think of as a quasi-imprisonment since those so punished had to live under surveillance in specified buildings, barracks rather than prisons.

During some periods of the Sung the punishments meted out to criminals varied not only according to their age, sex, status, and relation to the victim, but also according to the place where the crime occurred. In certain sensitive areas, the so-called "heavy-penalty places" (*chung-fa ti fen*), the punishments for some crimes were harsher than in the empire at large. Furthermore, for crimes of certain sorts these "heavy-penalty" punishments might be applied in ordinary jurisdictions. These punishments were "heavier" in that they called for the punishing of the family of the criminal, and for the confiscation of his patrimony (which was to be used to reward his accusers). The roots of the system go back into the 1030s when the punishments inflicted on thieves were made especially heavy in the capital area, but the system itself is usually said to have been established in 1061 for K'ai-feng county where heavy penalties were enacted for theft and robbery. The system was soon extended to a number of other nearby prefectures. By the late years of Shen-tsung's reign it had been extended to Ho-pei, Ching-tung, Huai-nan, and Fu-chien circuits.

In addition, under Emperor Che-tsung (r. 1085–1100), heavy penalties are mentioned for Yung-hsing-chün, Ching-hsi, Ho-tung, and Ch'in-feng circuits, so that the system covered all of north China except modern Shantung, plus Huai-nan (important as the route for grain transport from the southeast) and Fu-chien. The movement was not all one-way, for on occasion areas were shifted from heavy penalties back to the normal system, but the basic change still was toward a more severe system, so that eventually "heavy penalties" had become the norm. The use of severe penalties was also increased by rules which permitted the use of "heavy penalties" even in ordinary jurisdictions for crimes against officials, for killing three or more persons, for arson of a certain magnitude, for piracy, or for concealing criminals who were themselves liable for heavy penalties. In summary, what had begun as a special system of more severe sanctions for use in limited areas, by the late Northern Sung had become the usual practice, and the old "normal" areas became in effect especially lenient jurisdictions. The silence of Southern Sung sources about the system suggests that it fell into disuse when the dynasty was driven from the north, and the "normal" again became in fact normal.⁴¹

To the criminal, and to society, the list of potential penalties was less important than the punishments which were likely in practice to be inflicted. During the Sung actual penal practice was profoundly affected by a system of frequent grants of partial or total amnesty. This Sung system was the culmination of a pattern of periodically showing mercy to criminals which goes back at least to the Han. In the Northern Sung the state issued great acts of grace (*ta-she*) on average once every eighteen months, and in the Southern Sung once every twenty-four months. These acts spared all those guilty of capital crimes or less, whether or not their crimes had been discovered at the time of the amnesty, and whether or not the cases had been completed. No crimes were by statute excluded from coverage, though in practice the text of the decrees frequently excluded a few particularly heinous crimes. Thus, with limited exceptions, all fugitives, all prisoners in jails, all men being transported to exile, and all men at trial were freed. Even those who had previously been registered in exile were usually either released or allowed to move closer to the center of the empire by such acts. In addition to these great acts of grace the Sung rulers also issued a startling number of lesser amnesties which either freed those in a limited region or granted reductions of penalty rather than complete remission. Taken together with other facets of the Sung judicial system, this set of amnesty practices created a situation in which the penalties most likely to be fully inflicted were the least serious ones, beatings with the light or heavy

⁴¹ Saeki Tomi, "Sōdai ni tsukeru ju-ho chi-bun ni tsuite," in *Haneda Hakushi Kanreki Kinenkai* (Kyōto, 1950), pp. 505–30.

rod, and registration, which might follow a reduction of the death penalty and which was not automatically wholly ended by a great act of grace.⁴²

The system of amnesties, the manifold types of penalty, the use of punishment conversions, and the multitude of edicts which determined actual practice all combine to limit our current understanding of the Sung penal system. Only by making detailed studies, limited in time and subject, and focusing on practice as reflected in specific examples can we hope to produce an adequate description of Sung punishments, but even now we can say that the Sung authorities did establish numerous policies designed to avoid injustice, and tempered their punishments with perhaps excessive mercy.

Civil law

Some noteworthy developments occurred in criminal process and the treatment of convicts during the Sung; the resolution of issues we would classify as civil showed less change, with the striking exception of inheritance by women. The other most common "civil" concerns – contract, adoption, divorce, the general laws of inheritance, and the system of bequests – seem to have changed little from T'ang to Sung.⁴³ Continuity of usage reflects continuity of concern. Chinese interest centered on two closely interrelated but separable questions – the perpetuation of the family line, and the disposition of the patrimony.

Adoption, practiced from ancient times, touched on both these questions. The type of adoption most in the minds of Chinese lawmakers was the bringing into a family of a young male who could serve to carry on the ancestral worship in a line which would otherwise die out. From the adoptee's point of view the arrangement was beneficial since he would inherit the family property. For the adoptive parents the son would be a source of support during their lifetimes and of sacrifices after their deaths. The natural inclination to seek an heir among close relatives was given legal force in the T'ang and Sung by a rule which said that "all those who are without children are allowed to adopt as sons boys from their own clan who are otherwise qualified to perform ancestral sacrifices."⁴⁴

The ideal in adoption was thus to choose a close relative, preferably the son of a brother or of a male cousin. This ideal pattern was already apparent at least

⁴² Brian E. McKnight, *The quality of mercy: Amnesties and traditional Chinese justice* (Honolulu, 1981).

⁴³ Two Japanese sinologists, Niida Noboru and Shiga Shuzo, have been pre-eminent among those studying traditional Chinese law. They disagree sharply on a number of issues and deserve to be read together. For family law, which covers most of the subjects to be discussed in the following pages, see especially Shiga Shuzo, *Chūgoku kazokubō no genri* (Tōkyō, 1967); and Niida Noboru, *Chūgoku bōseishi kenkyū*, Volume 3: *Dorei, nūdōbō, kazoku, sonrakubō* (Tōkyō, 1962). See also Niida, *Tō-Sō hōritsu bunshu no kenkyū*.

⁴⁴ *TLSI* 2, p. 15; *SHT* 4, pp. 16b–17a.

by the Han period, but so was the widespread practice of adopting boys of different surnames. Although in the T'ang and Sung codes the regular penalty for the adoption of a boy of a different surname was one year of penal servitude for the adopting family and fifty blows of the light rod for the natal family, adoption of abandoned children of less than three years of age (Chinese-style) whose surnames were perforce unknown was sanctioned by both codes, and in times of natural disaster the three-year-old rule was relaxed.⁴⁵ Even adults could be adopted, and would thereafter be treated as regular family members. According to the *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* (*Comprehensive investigations of important documents*), the adopting family informed the authorities of their action and the names of the new family members were then entered on the household register.⁴⁶ There are also, of course, numerous examples of the extralegal adoption of those of different surnames, or the adoption of people with the same surname who were of different clans, and, in the T'ang, even of the adoption of foreigners.⁴⁷

The standard T'ang and Sung rule not only called for adopting boys from the same clan but also stipulated that they be otherwise qualified to perform ancestral sacrifices. The term used for being so qualified, *ho chao mu*, refers to the proper ordering of the ancestral halls, and was intended to preclude the adoption of someone of a higher generation by someone of a lower, for example to avoid having an uncle performing the role of the "son" for his nephew. Despite this rule it seems clear that such ritually improper adoptions occurred. The *Yüan tien chang* (*Statutes and precedents of the sacred administration of the great Yüan dynastic state*), for example, refers disapprovingly to the customs of the southerners, who adopt those of different surnames or those in violation of *ho chao mu*, or sons of former husbands, and so on.⁴⁸

The law was, however, clear and unambiguous in forbidding the adoption by commoners of "mean" people. The T'ang code (and echoing it the *Sung penal conspectus*) says that

anyone who adopts as a son or grandson a general bondsman (*tsa-hu*) will be liable for one and a half years of penal servitude. If they adopt a girl, the penalty is one hundred blows of the heavy rod. For an official bondsman (*kuan-hu*) increase this one degree. If anyone adopts a personal retainer (*pu-ch'u*) or a slave (*nu*) as a son or grandson then beat them one hundred blows of the heavy rod. All are to be returned to their original statuses.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ *TLSI* 2, pp. 108–9; *SHT* 12, p. 8b. For a good general description of adoption in the Sung, see Burns, "Private law in traditional China," esp. pp. 200 ff.

⁴⁶ *WHTK* (1936) 11, p. 116.

⁴⁷ Liu Hsü et al., eds., *Chiu T'ang shu* (945; Peking, 1975), pp. 3884, 4907.

⁴⁸ *SHT* 12, p. 8a; *TLSI* 2, pp. 15, 108; Shen Chia-pen, ed., *Ch'ung-chiao Yüan-tien-chang liu-shih chüan: Fu hsün-chi 2 ts'e* (Peking, 1908) (hereafter *YTC*) 17, pp. 19a–20b. See also Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Family and property in Sung China: Yüan Ts'ai's precepts for social life* (Princeton, 1984), pp. 106–7, 213–18.

⁴⁹ *TLSI* 2, p. 109; *SHT* 12, p. 9a.

By Sung times the first three of these statuses had largely disappeared, but presumably it was still forbidden to adopt a slave.

Adoption legally created a familial relationship, the adopted son having the status of a natural son of the principal wife. After death the son would be charged with responsibility for the ancestral rites; before death he was a full part of the community of life and economy. His name was deleted from the register of his natal family and added to that of his adopted family. The later birth of a son did not alter his position. It did, however, work one potential change in his role. If no later son were born to the couple it was illegal for an adopted son to return to his natal family. If a son had been born to his adoptive family after the adoption, he might be permitted to return to his natal family if they were without other sons.⁵⁰

The position of an adopted son in his adoptive family was legally secure against the machinations of his adoptive mother or grandmother. They could not arbitrarily oust him from his rightful position. Should they wish to contest his right to inherit they had to bring a case before the local authorities and show cause for the disinheritance.⁵¹

The taking of girls into the family followed a different pattern. The practice of "adopting" young girls, which was widespread in China until recent times, and continues to be common in Taiwan, was a device by which poorer families could avoid some of the expenses of childrearing and marriage. Donor families, feeling themselves unable to raise a girl child to marriageable age, would sell her for a nominal sum to an adopting family. The adopting family was presumptively taking the girl in with the intention of raising her to marriageable age, at which time she would be married to a male child of the adopting family. By so doing the adopting family would be spared the considerable expenses associated with the more prestigious normal marriage. For legal purposes the adopted girl became identical in status with other daughters of the family. The girls involved were referred to by a variety of terms at various times in Chinese history. A Sung source uses the term *yang-fu*, which was also current in later dynasties. Obviously in such cases the problems of adopting someone of a different surname did not arise.⁵²

⁵⁰ *TLSI* 2, p. 109; *SHT* 12, p. 8a. ⁵¹ *SS* (1977) 125, p. 2935; *CMC*, pp. 15–16.

⁵² For a description of such adoption and the so-called minor marriages that resulted, see Arthur P. Wolf and Huang Chieh-shan, *Marriage and adoption in China, 1845–1945* (Stanford, 1980), especially chapter 6. For a few brief comments on *yang-fu* in the Sung, see Niida Noboru, *Shina mibunbō shi*, ed. Zanho kankō kai (Tōkyō, 1948), pp. 52, 193, 581, 789, 807, *et passim*. For the legal equality of status of these girls with natal daughters in Sung times, see *CMC*, p. 130. Girls did not need to be of the same surname to be legally adoptable. *SHT* 12, p. 8b. Indeed, had they been of the same surname the end of the adoption, minor marriage, would have been improper.

Divorce, like adoption, appears to have been much the same in the Sung as under the T'ang. As a legal act it affected not only the status of the spouses but also their property relations, the legal relations of kinship, and mourning obligations. Classic sources like the *Li chi* (*Book of rites*) say that divorce could occur under one of seven conditions: when a wife was barren, jealous, incurably ill, loquacious, disobedient to the husband's parents, a thief, or an adulteress. However, these conditions could not be used as grounds for divorce when there were the "three bars to separation" (*san pu ch'u*); that is to say, when the wife had mourned the husband's parents, when the husband had become rich only after marriage, and when the wife had no relatives to receive her. (It should be noted that these bars did not apply if the wife was incurably ill or had been guilty of adultery.)⁵³

Divorce under these seven conditions was initiated by the husband; in addition there were certain conditions under which the state mandated the dissolution of the marriage. Under the rules of "righteous separation" (*i-chüeh*) a woman who struck or reviled her husband, or struck, reviled, or killed her husband's parents or certain other close relatives by marriage, was to be divorced irrespective of the husband's wishes, even if there was an intervening amnesty, and even if she had not yet gone to her husband's home. This sword, however, had two edges. Divorce was also mandated if a husband beat or killed members of his wife's family.⁵⁴

These rules were repeated in the T'ang and Sung codes. In law a husband who divorced his wife without such grounds was liable for one year of penal servitude. In the historical materials, however, we do not find mention of either these seven conditions or of "righteous separation." In practice, in the T'ang and Sung, as under earlier dynasties, divorce often seems to have occurred for trivial reasons. Even where ostensible grounds are cited it often appears that the true reason was the husband's parents' dislike of the wife.

The general rule was that the husband could divorce the wife, but the wife could not divorce the husband. In the T'ang code a woman who unilaterally left her husband was liable for two years of penal servitude. If she had remarried this was increased two degrees (to three years of penal servitude).⁵⁵ Penalties during the Sung may have been even more severe if they followed those set down in a Later Chou edict of 958.⁵⁶ However, in the Southern Sung, if a wife wished to divorce a husband who, because he had committed a crime, was to be "transferred in residence" (*i-hsiang*), or put in penal registration (*p'ien-kuan*), her petition would be approved. Furthermore, during the Southern Sung, if a

⁵³ Ch'ü T'ung-tsu, *Law and society in traditional China* (Paris, 1965), pp. 118-23.

⁵⁴ Ch'ü, *Law and society*, pp. 122-3. ⁵⁵ TLSI. ⁵⁶ SHT 14, p. 7b.

husband had gone off and not returned for three years, a woman could then remarry – an act which had the same legal effects as divorce.⁵⁷

T'ang and Sung law also sanctioned divorce by mutual consent, even without the usual causes. The T'ang and Sung codes state that “if a husband and wife are not mutually compatible and agree to separate they are not to be tried.” This was called “harmonious separation” (*ho-li*).⁵⁸

Divorce affected the parties in a variety of ways. The wife returned to her natal home, and like her husband was free to remarry. She no longer owed mourning to the relatives of her ex-husband, nor to him. Furthermore, her sons owed her only one year's mourning, not the usual three years'. (If a father died after the divorce and a son had succeeded as his heir, the son owed no mourning at all to his mother.)

The approved general pattern was for the children to remain in the household of their father. In particular, males destined to continue ancestral worship stayed with their fathers. But in Sung writings there are a variety of examples of children going with their mothers. This was apparently not uncommonly true of daughters where the father was clearly not a fit parent.⁵⁹

Divorce also affected property relations, since the divorced wife had no claim against the property of her ex-husband. She might, however, have a right to her dowry and engagement gifts if the divorce was groundless. The *Yüan tien chang* remarks that if a divorced woman wished to remarry, her betrothal goods remained with her husband, unless the divorce had been groundless. And in the *Ch'ing ming chi* there is a case where, in a divorce by mutual consent, the divorce document specified the return of these valuables.⁶⁰

During the Sung such divorce documents (*li-hun chuang*) had to be prepared by the husband and given to the wife, a usage which continued under later dynasties. Although there is not much evidence on the form and content of these documents in the Sung, there is an example given in the novel *The water margin* (*Shui-hu chuan*) which certainly describes the Yüan and Ming (1368–1644) practice, and probably also reflects Sung usages. Lin Chung, in divorcing his wife, gave her a document which said,

The instructor of the Eastern Capital [Tung-tu or K'ai-feng] Pa-shih Wan Imperial Army, Lin Chung, being guilty of a serious crime, has been sentenced to penal registration in ____ Prefecture. Since there is no way of assuring whether he will live or die once he has gone, and since he has a young wife, Lady Chang, he willingly establishes this divorce letter, freeing her to remarry, and agreeing to abstain perpetually from interference. This is being

⁵⁷ TLSI 3, p. 5; SHT 14, p. 7a; CMC, pp. 453–4. ⁵⁸ TLSI 3, p. 5; SHT 14, pp. 6a–7a.

⁵⁹ Hung Mai, *I chien chih* (Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng ed.) ping-chih 14, p. 107. ⁶⁰ CMC, pp. 453–4.

done voluntarily, and without any compulsion. Fearful that hereafter there would be no evidence of his intent he has drawn up this document as a pledge. Dated: year, month, day.⁶¹

The main points of this document are worth noting. The principle is named, as are the circumstances leading to divorce, the identity of the wife, the intent to divorce, the willingness to allow remarriage, the voluntary character of the husband's action, and the intent that the document function thereafter as a pledge. The date is given. The document would have been validated by a signature or a handprint, and this validation would presumably have been followed by the signature of the preparer.

Most Sung laws on matters we would consider civil were closely patterned after T'ang prototypes. Some aspects of Southern Sung rules on inheritance, however, differed strikingly, not only from earlier patterns but also from those in later times. In traditional China it was proverbial that males inherited property, while females received only dowries. The basic rule during most of the imperial period was that the patrimony was to be divided equally among sons (and sons' sons if the father was dead). At some times a small extra amount might be given to the person charged with providing the ancestral ceremonies, but the basic rule was equal division. During the Southern Sung, and apparently only during the Southern Sung, unmarried girls received a regular share of the patrimony on the death of their fathers amounting to half the share awarded to their brothers.⁶²

In T'ang law, women living in the household received some financial protection on the death of the male household head. Widows without sons succeeded to their husband's property. And both widows and unmarried daughters had a right to support for life from the patrimony. Moreover, unmarried daughters had a claim on a dowry, which amounted in value to one-half the share of the marriage award to be given to their brothers. This dowry was held in trust for them, and was not property under their control. If they had no brothers, and their mother was also dead, they would inherit the entire patrimony, minus the expenses of the father's burial.⁶³

⁶¹ Shih Nai-an, *Shui-hu chuan* (*Kuo-hsieh chi-pen ts'ung-shu* ed.), pp. 70-1.

⁶² The question of inheritance by women was one of the most hotly debated issues separating Niida Noboru and Shiga Shuzo. See Shiga, *Chūgoku kazokubō*, pp. 401-9, 437 ff.; and Niida, *Chūgoku hōseishi kenkyū*, Volume 3: *Dorei, nōdōbō, kazoku, sonrakubō*, pp. 381-93. As Patricia Buckley Ebrey has noted, the contradictions in the evidence are perhaps best explained as results of regional or class differences in customary law. See Patricia Buckley Ebrey, "Women in the kinship system of the Southern Song upper class," in *Women in China: Current directions in historical scholarship*, ed., Richard Guisso and Stanley Johansen (Youngstown, NY, 1981), p. 118, note 13. For examples of such divisions, see Liu K'o-chuang, *Hou-ts'un hsien-sheng ta ch'uan li* (*Ssu-yen t'ang* 1304 ed.) 193, pp. 10a-17b; 197, p. 7a.

⁶³ Ebrey, "Women in the kinship system." See also Burns, "Private law," pp. 289 ff.

During the Northern Sung the rules of inheritance followed the T'ang patterns, but in the Southern Sung the pattern of female inheritance was different. Girls received not a dower portion, but an actual share of the estate, which became fully their property. Furthermore, a brotherless girl had the right to inherit her father's share of property which had been held jointly by her father and her paternal uncles. Under T'ang law, if brothers held property jointly, on the death of one brother his share passed to his sons. If he had no sons his share would not pass to his daughters, but would pass entire to the surviving brothers. Under Southern Sung law such a father's share would pass to his daughters.

The strong position of women in Southern Sung times is also reflected in contemporary criticism of the use of lots in deciding upon the division of inherited property. In pre-Revolutionary China it was customary in some regions to use lots to determine the actual disposition of the different portions which together comprised the patrimony. This custom can be traced back at least as far as the Southern Sung, and was current among the literati as well as the peasantry. In a book of family advice by the twelfth-century official Kao Ssu-yeh, the author first warns that "in the dividing up of a household it is imperative that it be equitable, so as to avoid wrangling," but he then goes on to warn that

if the brothers consult lots in dividing the household then the family temple may be without a director. Furthermore, among the statutes there are provisions about the inheritance by widows of their husband's property, and by daughters of a share of the father's property. Heaven (*t'ien*) forbid that they should draw the lot and get [the share entailing the performance of the sacrifices]! Then there would be no sacrifices.⁶⁴

The reasons for this unique Southern Sung legal pattern are not wholly clear. It is possible that it reflected the influence of the customary law of south China on state laws. Both the T'ang and the Northern Sung were states with political centers in north China. Their legal patterns reflected their debt to the northern states of the period of the Northern and Southern dynasties (386–589). The Southern Sung was centered on the Yangtze valley, and was understandably affected by local norms and practices. It is also worth remembering that women inherited property under traditional Vietnamese customary law, and that south Chinese inheritance patterns may be simply one more example of customs common to the southern Chinese and Southeast Asian wet rice cultures.

From an early date the Chinese inheritance system also included the use of testamentary disposition of goods. Sung practices in many respects continued

⁶⁴ Liu Ch'ing-chih, *Chieh-tzu t'ung-lu* (*Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen* ed.) 6, p. 13a–b. On the general practice of drawing lots, see Niida, *Tō-Sō hōritsu*, pp. 554–5. For a Sung reference, see CMC, p. 133.

those current in the T'ang. The earliest Sung rule extant is in fact a T'ang ordinance on mourning and burial preserved in the *Sung legal conspectus* (*Sung penal conspectus*). After first giving the proper disposition of the patrimony for a man whose family line was ending and who died intestate, the rule closes by noting that "if the deceased, while still living, himself established a testament of succession, which is both verified and clear, then this ordinance does not apply."⁶⁵

This rule suggests that there were no limits on the ability of a living owner to dispose of property, if he had no immediate family heirs. That this continued to be the rule until the 1060s is indicated by a memorial by Wang Yen-sou (1044-94).⁶⁶

Yüan-yü 1st year (1086), 7th month, the day *ting-ch'ou*, the Left Policy Critic Wang Yen-sou said, "I humbly feel that in this world nothing is more grievous than to be old and have no sons or grandsons. The ancient kings displayed their humanity in their giving of succor and their generosity in what they bestowed. Thus in the ancient system of testamentary succession there were no limitations on the amounts. All could be given, whether to those of their own clan or to relatives of a different surname . . . But thereafter officials concerned with profits were unwilling to perpetuate their intent, and set up laws limiting (the amounts that could be given). This offends against normal human feelings. Amounts of less than 300 cash could be wholly given away. For amounts of less than 1,000 cash, 300 could be given away. For 1,000 or more, one-third could be given and that was all. Our state possesses the vastness that is within the four seas and the riches of the Nine Provinces (*chiu-chou*). How can we act in this way? But those who establish this law are calling into question the humanity of the Court. I humbly hope that the emperor will especially issue an order reviving the old law on testamentary succession of the Chia-yü era (1056-63) in order to soothe the hearts of the solitary and old . . .

Except for this practice of inheritance by women, the noncriminal laws of the Sung which dealt with economic matters seem to have closely followed T'ang usages. For example, written contracts in the Sung were drawn up much as they had been in preceding dynasties. A comparison of T'ang examples from Tun-huang, Yüan dynasty contracts as reflected in works giving sample forms for documents, and partial Sung examples drawn from such works as the *Collected Sung documents* suggests that there were no major changes in format during the Sung. Written contracts had been, and continued to be, used in the mortgaging or selling of land, buildings, or slaves, and frequently for the sale of animals. They were of especial importance in all exchanges involving land.

Although the forms of contracts apparently were not mandated by the state, there are some indications that the same basic patterns were followed in various parts of China. The similarities of land contracts over the centuries can

⁶⁵ *SHT* 12, p. 13b.

⁶⁶ *HCP* (1965) 383, p. 2b.

perhaps be most vividly demonstrated by comparing a famous contract from the Northern Wei (386–534), dated 507, and a Sung contract dated 984:

Cheng-chih 4th year (AD 507), 9th month, 16th day. The commoner from the north quarter, Chang Shen-lo purchases from the commoner Lu Ah-t'ou, three *mu* of property. To the south is the tomb of the Prince of Ch'i. To the north it extends for fifty-three paces. On the east is the tomb of the Prince of Ch'i. To the west it extends for twelve paces. The price is nine lengths of silk. The property is guaranteed free from bandits . . . After this contract has been established it certainly will not be changed or regretted . . . Silk five lengths. It has been signed as verification. Contract preparer: P'an. Witness: Lu Shan-wang; Witness: Lu Jung-sun.⁶⁷

The Sung contract also has a number of lacunae. Nonetheless the similarity of general form is striking:

An-hsi county . . . the garden owners, Ma Ying, An Ch'ung, Nan An-ssu, and Nan An-hua, together establish this contract, voluntarily selling their personal property. To the southwest is the Yüeh Road. To the south the Garden. This plot extends east and west for . . . twenty- . . . paces, and to the north and south for twenty-four paces. This plot Ma Ying and the others voluntarily [give] to Shih Chin, perpetually to serve as his tomb property. Shih Chin and his descendants are to be the owners, in good faith to have the above tomb . . . If other men should cause trouble through animosity, all such matters the seller, Ma Ying . . . personally will manage in accordance with what is appropriate, and will not . . . Shih. Now, having received the price of four strings five hundred [cash] and having exchanged the contract all is fulfilled. The officials have their governmental laws. We did not dare to establish a nonofficial contract. *T'ai-p'ing hsing-kuo* 9th year (984), 11th month, 4th day. The voluntary seller of this tomb property, Ma Ying. Joint seller of the property, An Ch'ung. Joint seller of the property, Nan An-ssu. Joint seller of the property, the Guard Officer . . . Shao.⁶⁸

The essential points of contracts, as seen in these examples, included the date, ownership status, facts of the sale, size of the plot, location, neighbors, boundaries, prices, indication of the voluntary character of the sale, some indication of how future disputes would be handled, and the signatures or marks of the seller and the guarantors. The date seems to have been a required part of any contract. In pre-T'ang times it was often recorded at the end of the document. In T'ang and Sung times it might be either at the end or at the beginning.

The section on ownership status indicated whether the property was owned privately, communally, or jointly by people with different surnames. The facts of the sale recorded the name of the seller (or buyer); his home place, frequently including the district, subdistrict (*hsiang* or *li*), and village; and the fact that he was selling (or buying) a particular parcel of land. The size of the plot was

⁶⁷ Tuan Fang, ed., *T'ao-chai ts'ang shih chi*, in *Shih k'o shih liao ts'ung-shu*, ed. Hsin wen-feng ch'u-pan kung-ssu (Taipei, 1982) 6, p. 8035.

⁶⁸ Niida, *Tō-Sō hōritsu*, p. 109.

given, usually in terms of paces (*pu*). Its location was specified by naming its boundaries. These were often indicated by naming objects such as streams or rocks which could be used to define the parcel. The names of the neighbors were recorded, as was the price, the fact of exchange, and the signatures or legal marks of the key participants, the sellers and the guarantors. Presumably, in the Sung as in later times, the contract only became actually effective with the physical exchange of some form of payment. It also seems possible that these contracts, like many in later dynasties, contained within themselves provisions covering the penalties for breach, in order to reduce as much as possible the need to rely on state intervention.

The state did, of course, intervene in a number of ways in this system. First, and most obviously the authorities intervened by determining beforehand certain key elements in contractual relations such as capacity to conclude valid contracts. Juniors, for example, did not have, under most circumstances, the legal capacity to dispose of family property. The Sung government also required the certification of contracts of certain sorts, such as those used in the sale or pawning of animals, buildings, or land. Such contracts, which might be recorded on official printed forms, were called "red contracts" (*bung-ch'i* or *ch'ih-ch'i*). Contracts concluded without state certification were called "white contracts" (*pai-ch'i*), and supposedly could not be used themselves as evidence in lawsuits, though they were not wholly without legal weight. Contracts of both sorts were in use from the beginning of the Sung, but white contracts seem to have become more common in the late Northern and the Southern Sung. The state naturally attempted to suppress them, since it derived revenue from the certification process, and because the lack of proper documentation could lead to destructive and wasteful lawsuits. Certification was thus important since the state might be involved after the fact in resolving disputes.⁶⁹

CONCLUSION

In law, as in other aspects of Chinese life, some practices inherited from earlier times reached their zenith in the Sung and disappeared thereafter. At the same time the Sung was the key developmental era for other practices. It served in some ways as simply a bridge between its predecessors and those who came afterwards, transmitting patterns with little (apparent) change. And yet, in other ways Sung law and legal systems were unique and peculiar. All these different patterns of change were rooted in the dynasty's transitional locus, between the aristocratic and overwhelmingly rural life pattern of T'ang and

⁶⁹ Ebrey, *Family and property in Sung China*, pp. 311-12.

earlier states, and the literati-dominated, more urban, and commercial societies of later times.

The Sung had inherited a tradition of granting amnesties, of a wide variety of sorts and with various terms, with extraordinary frequency. This pattern, with its profound implications for the actual treatment of convicted persons, lasted with relatively little variation from the Han through the Sung. Indeed, it would seem that the Sung was the high point of this practice of imperial grants of mercy, and then, with the rise of the Yüan, this pattern ended abruptly. This earlier practice is possibly best explained as the states' response to the excessive judicial and penal burdens placed on them by the success of their police systems. Later dynasties were much more parsimonious in granting mercy. Perhaps their police systems simply did not load upon magistrates and penal systems such a heavy burden. Whatever may be the factors that caused this striking change, its existence is clear.

The Sung had also inherited from earlier times a type of legal code epitomized by the great T'ang code. The Sung, typically, took this code over from its embodiment in the code of the Later Chou and maintained it untouched in form, while in fact departing sharply in practice from the judicial and penal systems originally characteristic of T'ang law. With the interesting exception of the Yüan, later dynasties, including the northern Sino-barbarian dynasties, harked back to the T'ang code, and in varying degrees copied its statutes into their own legal compilations.

The Sung departures in practice from the pattern implicit in the T'ang code were in fact merely further developments from changes that had begun in the late T'ang and continued through the Five Dynasties. The judicial use of collections of edicts, inherited from the preceding dynasties, was greatly expanded during the Sung, and served as a principal method for adopting law to changed circumstances. In later dynasties the need to respond to changes in the judicial environment, which had driven this Sung expansion, was dealt with in a somewhat different way. The Ming and Ch'ing (1616-1912) governments modified the code itself by adding substatutes to the original statutes, though these substatutes themselves usually originated as edicts which were themselves responses to specific cases of local situations.

Sung social and economic developments were the root of the ways in which Sung law and legal practice stand out as distinctively different from both earlier and later dynasties. Clearly the most noteworthy and socially significant examples of this Sung distinctiveness are to be found in rules in which the issue of the distribution of the property of families that died out without male heirs was most widely discussed. A multitude of laws were enacted to deal with this critical issue. It is also abundantly clear that, during the Southern Sung, women inherited property in their own right, even if they had living qualified

brothers. This odd characteristic of the Sung legal system did not long outlast the dynasty. Even during the late Southern Sung, social conservatives mounted an attack against these developments, though only under the Yüan dynasty did they achieve their goals. With the collapse of the Sung this line of legal development died out so that the legal position of women declined, and the stage was set for the reimposition of the "traditional" pattern of gender relations.

In short, the Sung was a transitional era. Some old patterns of legal practice died out; other, new patterns, emerged, but some of these new developments did not long outlive the dynasty that created them.

CHAPTER 5

SUNG EDUCATION: SCHOOLS, ACADEMIES, AND EXAMINATIONS

John W. Chaffee

INTRODUCTION

The Sung dynasty (960–1279) was an age of learning. Although condemned by its critics for slighting the military while esteeming the civil, the esteem that the Sung emperors and their ministers undeniably gave to learning had impressive results. Such were the Sung contributions in poetry, prose, painting, philosophy, scholarship, mathematics and scientific thought that it is not too much of an overstatement to say that Sung learning constituted the primary intellectual legacy for subsequent dynasties, to be accepted, adapted, challenged, and at times rejected, but never ignored.

This cultural efflorescence was a complex phenomenon. Prerequisite for it were the political stability of the Sung (especially the Northern Sung, 960–1127); dramatic advances in agriculture, technology, and commerce; demographic and urban growth; and especially the spreading use of printing, all of which are discussed elsewhere in this volume. Sung examinations (*kung-chü*) and schools, however, provided its immediate cause and socio-institutional context. When in 977 the second emperor, T'ai-tsung (r. 976–97), radically expanded the examination system, passage through which qualified one for service in the government, he created a demand for learning which was to have a profound impact upon the outlook and lifestyle of the upper classes, indeed of the entire society. And when, beginning in the 1020s and 1030s, first local officials and then the central government began establishing government schools in prefectures (*chou, fu*) and counties (*hsien*), they created centers of Confucian learning which, in addition to providing instruction for at least some of those desiring it, served also as ceremonial centers, libraries, and at times printing enterprises. Indeed, the structural and organizational features of these schools can be seen to have set the pattern for the government schools of the late imperial period.

Sung schools and examinations were many-faceted in their relation to society, however, and their importance was not confined to the promotion of

learning. Given the rewards offered by examinations, a status hierarchy based upon learning and test-taking emerged. Although there were other important status markers in Sung society – those based upon official rank and bureaucratic posts, landholding, wealth, and marriage, to name just a few – those based upon academic success were among the most prominent and prestigious. For that very reason there emerged an opportunity structure unique to education, involving not only the standard prescribed steps to success, but less formal ones as well, their own opportunity structure. Despite the efforts of the early emperors to create an examination system that was fair and impartial, pressures to succeed resulted not only in outright abuses – cheating was a particular problem in the Southern Sung (1127–1279) – but also in the appearance of alternative examination pathways offering competitive advantages to the privileged.

The spread of learning also had a profound impact upon society at large. At a popular level the spread of education, while far from universal, nevertheless provided important skills to at least some among the merchants, craftsmen, brokers, farmers and others active in the growing Sung economy. For the elite and those aspiring to elite status, the standardized curriculum of the examinations and therefore of the government schools resulted in a literati culture of remarkable uniformity stretching to every corner of the empire. Indeed, it can be argued that the remarkable political stability of China in the late imperial period would have been impossible without that literati culture.

METHODS OF RECRUITMENT

Entry into the bureaucracy was not limited to those passing the examinations. In fact a number of routes were available into the civil (*wen*) and military (*wu*) services which together constituted the personnel pool for the bureaucracy. These included purchase of titular office (*chieh-kuan* or *chi-lu-k'uan*), promotion from clerical status or from the officer ranks of the army (in the military service only), hereditary privilege for imperial clansmen (*tsung-shih*), and the use of the *yin* privilege, often translated as “protection.” Of these by far the most important was the *yin* privilege, which permitted officials above given ranks to nominate one or more of their relatives to official status on special occasions such as the triennial suburban sacrifices or retirement, though even they had to pass a placement examination (*ch'üan-shih*) in order to gain office.¹ The *yin* privilege accounted for 45 percent of those in the civil and military services in

¹ Winston Wan Lo (Lo Wen), *An introduction to the civil service of Sung China: With emphasis on its personnel administration* (Honolulu, 1987), pp. 102–11, provides a succinct description of the entry methods. For comprehensive treatments of the *yin* privilege, see Umehara Kaoru, *Sōdai kanryo seido kenkyū* (Kyōto, 1985), chapter 5, pp. 423–500; and Yu Piao, *Sung-tai yin-pu chib-tu yen-chiu* (Peking, 2001).

1213, the one year for which we have statistics, and was highly valued by those who qualified for it, for its recipients were able to enter service without taking the examinations and to do so at a younger age than those who entered via the examinations.² It had its disadvantages, however, for its recipients lacked the prestige and were subject to a slower promotion track than the examination graduates. As a result, many protected officials took the examinations in an attempt to improve their prospects. It is therefore fair to say that schooling and examinations were major facts of life for all active and aspiring officials.

In treating Sung schools and examinations, the bulk of this chapter will be historical, concerned with the political movements, institutional changes and historical vagaries that determined their development. The concluding section, however, will address the broader questions how that development affected Sung society and culture and the nature of the Sung educational legacy.

EARLY SUNG DEVELOPMENTS

When the Sung came to power in northern China in 960 they inherited a host of educational institutions and institutional regulations from the T'ang (618–907) and Five Dynasties (907–960), but many were defunct. Examinations, it is true, had continued in the north virtually without interruption during the turbulent years of the late ninth and the tenth centuries, with “advanced-scholar” (*chin-shih*) degrees conferred upon those passing an examination consisting of poetry composition (*shih*) and (*fu*), discussions of the Classics (*lun*), and policy discussion questions (*ts'ê*), and “various [field] degrees” (*chu-k'ô*) given to those passing a specialized examination consisting of memory passages (*t'ieh*) and written elucidations (*mo-i*) in one of a number of subjects such as law, history, the rituals, and the Classics (see Table 3). However, the numbers involved were small – during the Five Dynasties the annual combined average of “advanced scholar” (*chin-shih*) and “various field” (*chu-k'ô*) degrees was only thirty-three.³ This is hardly surprising, for with a few exceptions formal schooling had disappeared. Although it is not clear how widespread government schools established in prefectures, counties, and even communities were in the early T'ang, by the late T'ang these were unquestionably defunct.⁴ Learning continued in Buddhist temples and monasteries where

² The 1213 figures are given in Li Hsin-ch'uan, *Chien-yen i lai ch'ao yeh tsa chi* (hereafter CYTC), 2 parts (*T'sung shu chi ch'eng* ed.), Part 1 14, p. 528.

³ Ma Tuan-lin, *Wen hsien t'ung k'ao* (1308; Taipei, 1964) (hereafter WHTK (1964)) 30, p. 282.

⁴ For T'ang education, see Taga Akigorō, *Tōdai Kyōikushi no Kenkyū: Nihon gakkō kyōiku no genryū* (Tōkyō, 1953), available in summary translation by Penelope Ann Herbert as *The history of education in T'ang China* (Osaka, 1985), and more recently, Wu Tsung-kuo, *T'ang-tai k'ô-chū chih-tu yen-chiu* (Shen-yang, 1992).

Table 3. *Subjects in the civil service examinations*¹

Subjects	Contents of the tests ²
<i>Chin-shih</i> (presented scholar)	To compose one <i>shih</i> poem, one <i>fu</i> rhyme-prose, one policy essay (<i>lun</i>); To answer five policy-discussion questions (<i>ts'ue</i>); To answer ten "written elucidation" (<i>mo-i</i>) questions on either the <i>Ch'un-ch'iu</i> or the <i>Li-chi</i> classic.
<i>Chiu-ching</i> (Nine Classics) ³	120 memory questions (<i>t'ieh-ching</i>), 60 written elucidations on the Nine Classics.
<i>Wu-ching</i> (Five Classics) ⁴	80 memory questions, 50 written elucidations on the Five Classics.
<i>San-Li</i> (Three Classics of the Rites)	110 written elucidations on the <i>Rites of the Chou</i> , the <i>Record of rites</i> , and the <i>Book of rites</i> .
<i>K'ai-pao li</i> (Code of K'ai-pao rituals)	300 written elucidations of the <i>Code</i> and its commentary.
<i>Hsüeh-chiu</i> (Specialization in one or two classics)	70 written elucidations, of them 25 on the <i>Book of changes</i> , 25 on the <i>Book of documents</i> , 10 on the <i>Analects</i> , and 10 on the <i>Erb-ya</i> and the <i>Classic of filial piety</i> . In case the specialization is in the <i>Mao commentary on the Book of poetry</i> : the same as the above, except that the 50 questions on the <i>Book of changes</i> and on the <i>Book of documents</i> were replaced by questions on the <i>Mao commentary</i> .
<i>San-chuan</i> (Three commentaries on the Spring and autumn annals)	110 written elucidations on the three commentaries.
<i>San-shih</i> (The three histories)	300 written elucidations on the three standard histories: The <i>Records of the historian</i> (<i>Shih-chi</i>), the <i>History of the former Han dynasty</i> (<i>Han-shu</i>), and the <i>History of the later Han dynasty</i> (<i>Hou-Han shu</i>).
<i>Ming-fa</i> (Law) ⁵	40 questions on legal codes (<i>lü</i>) and statutes (<i>ling</i>); 10 written elucidation question on the <i>Analects</i> ; and 10 on the <i>Erb-ya</i> and the <i>Classic of filial piety</i> .

¹ See Chin Chung-shu, "Pei-Sung k'o-chü chih-tu yen-chiu," *Hsin-ya hsüeh-pao* 6 No. 1 (1964), pp. 205–81. See especially pp. 212–16. For an even more detailed discussion on the change of contents and ways of examinations throughout the Sung, see Chin Chung-shu's "Pei-Sung k'o-chü chih-tu yen-chiu hsü," *Kuo-li Ch'eng-kung ta-hsüeh li-shih hsüeh-pao* 5 (1978), pp. 134–243. See esp. pp. 174–90.

² Various forms of question, such as *mo-i* etc., were employed. See the next note.

³ The Nine Classics were the *Book of changes* (*I-ching*), the *Book of documents* (*Shang-shu*), the *Book of poetry* (*Shih-ching*), the *Record of rites* (*Li-chi*), the *Book of rites* (*I-li*), the *Rites of the Chou* (*Chou-li*), the *Kung-yang commentary to the Ch'un-ch'iu*, the *Ku-liang commentary to the Ch'un-ch'iu*, and the *Tso commentary to the Ch'un-ch'iu*.

⁴ The Five Classics were the *Book of changes*, the *Book of documents*, the *Book of poetry*, the *Record of rites*, and the *Kung-yang commentary to the Ch'un-ch'iu*.

⁵ For more information on this subject, see Hsü Tao-lin (Hsü Dau-lin), "Sung-tai te fa-lü k'ao-shih," in his *Chung-kuo fa-chih shih lun-chi* (Taipei, 1975), pp. 188–229.

monks frequently gave instruction in Confucian as well as Buddhist texts to laymen as well as novices,⁵ and in a few prominent government-established schools, for example, the Mount Lu National School established in modern Kiangsi by the Southern T'ang kingdom (937–75) in the tenth century. Most education, however, was purely private, carried on in homes and studies, particularly, though not exclusively, those of literati families with traditions of learning.

During the first years of the Sung, educational conditions changed very little. The founding emperor, T'ai-tsu (r. 960–76), was more concerned with consolidating his fledgling regime, reunifying the empire, guarding against powerful neighbors along the northern border, and staffing his bureaucracy with the manpower then available to him, than with the promotion of learning. Yet he was not unsympathetic to education. Following T'ang precedent, in 962 he established a Directorate of Education (*Kuo-tzu chien*) with general authority over educational affairs and specific responsibility for teaching the sons of officials, though it increasingly came to accept commoners,⁶ and in his most important institutional innovation he created a palace examination (*tien-shih* or *yü-shih*) whereby those who passed the departmental examination (*sheng-shih* or *Li-pu shih*, Ministry of Rites examination) given by the Ministry of Rites (*Li-pu*) were personally examined by the emperor, and this remained a part of the examination system thereafter.⁷ Nevertheless, the numbers of degrees given during his reign actually fell to an annual average of nineteen.⁸

The distinctively Sung examination system thus really began with T'ai-tsung, when in 977 the newly acceded emperor conferred an unheard-of 109 *chin-shih* and 207 *chu-k'o* degrees. Also unprecedented was the conferral of facilitated degrees (*t'e-tsou-ming*) on some 184 elderly *chu-k'o* candidates who had taken the examinations between ten and fifteen times, thereby entitling them to minor titular offices, though not to substantive officeholding.⁹

⁵ See Eric Zürcher, "Buddhism and education in T'ang times," in *Neo-Confucian education: The formative phase*, ed. William Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee (Berkeley, 1989), pp. 19–56, and Yen Keng-wang, "T'ang-jen hsi yeh shan-lin ssu-yüan chih feng-shangs," in his *T'ang-shih yen-chiu lun-ts'ung* (Hong Kong, 1969), pp. 367–424.

⁶ Hsü Sung et al., eds., *Sung hui yao chi kao* (1809, 1936; Taipei, 1964) *Hsüan-chü* 28, p. 1a; *Ch'ung-ju* 1, p. 29a. The statement concerning commoners follows Thomas H. C. Lee (Li Hung-ch'i), *Government education and examinations in Sung China* (Hong Kong, 1985), pp. 58, 62, who argues that despite a formal requirement that students at the Directorate come from families of officials, in practice students' credentials were not questioned.

⁷ *SHY* (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 7, pp. 1a–2a. This action has been viewed by some Japanese scholars, particularly, as an important step in the growth of autocracy during the Sung. See Miyazaki Ichisada, *China's examination bell: The civil service examinations of Imperial China*, trans. Conrad Schirokauer (New York, 1976), pp. 74–5; and Araki Toshikazu, *Sōdai kakyō seido kenkyū* (Kyōto, 1969), pp. 284–9.

⁸ *WHTK* (1964) 32, p. 305.

⁹ *WHTK* (1964) 32, p. 305; *SHY* (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 7, p. 2a–b; Li Tao, *Hsü Tzu chih t'ung chien ch'ang pien* (1183; 1883 ed.; Taipei, 1965) (hereafter *HCP* (1965)) 18, pp. 1b–2b.

From then until the end of the Sung an average of 192 degrees were given per year (not counting facilitated degrees) and an elaborate institutional structure developed to accommodate the expanded system. A good many explanations have been advanced as to why T'ai-tsung undertook this expansion,¹⁰ but at least three considerations appear to have been central. First, with the conquest of southern China virtually complete, the Sung faced the challenge of staffing an expanded bureaucracy. Second, the great aristocratic families which from the Period of Division (220–589) through much of the T'ang had constituted China's unquestioned ruling class had largely disappeared – at least as powerful social entities – during the disorders of the late T'ang and Five Dynasties, so that there was no elite group ready to inherit the mantle of government.¹¹ Third, faced with a recent history of military domination of the government and his own military misfortunes in the war against the Liao (907–1125) that had served to alienate him from his generals, T'ai-tsung was determined to curb the generals and the predominant military elite, and the use of examinations can be viewed as one of his means for doing so.¹² In the short run this might have seemed a dubious policy, since the literati families of the tenth century were hardly a powerful group, but in the long run it was a brilliant success, for by making learning a primary path to power, the Sung emperors were able to channel the energies and secure the allegiance of the landholding elites of the empire, and thus provide an enduring foundation of support for the dynasty.

The impact of the examinations' expansion was soon felt as increased numbers of candidates were selected by their prefectures to take the examinations in K'ai-feng. These "selected men" (*chü-jen* or *te-chieh-jen*), who had totalled 5,200 in 977, almost doubled to 10,260 by 983, and over the next twenty years reports of their numbers ranged between 10,000 and 17,000.¹³ Such numbers seriously strained the now antiquated examination machinery, and as a result structural and procedural innovations were instituted which significantly altered the character of the examinations.

¹⁰ For a recent and detailed treatment of the question, see Ho Chung-li, "Pei-Sung heng ta k'o-chü ch'u shih ti yüan-yin yü jung kuan li ti kuan-hsi," in *Sung-shih yen-chiu chi-k'ao*, ed. Hang-chou ta-hsüeh li-shih hsi Sung-shih yen-chiu shih (Hang-chou, 1986), pp. 81–106. See also John W. Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning in Sung China: A social history of examinations* (Cambridge, 1985; new ed., Albany, 1995), pp. 50–1.

¹¹ The disappearance of the T'ang aristocracy has been most effectively analyzed by David G. Johnson in "The last years of a great clan: The Li family of Chao-chün in the late T'ang and early Sung," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 37 No. 1 (June 1977), pp. 5–102.

¹² Lau Nap-yin and Huang Kuan-chung, "Founding and consolidation of the Sung dynasty under T'ai-tsu (960–976), T'ai-tsung (976–997), and Chen-tsung (997–1022)," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 5, Part 1: *The Sung dynasty and its precursors, 907–1279*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge and New York, 2008), pp. 245–7.

¹³ *HCP* (1965) *passim*; *SHY* (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 1, p. 6. The highest reported figure was 17,300 in 992.

First, to control the numbers of *chü-jen* coming to K'ai-feng, prefectural selection was developed into a qualifying examination (*chieh-shih* or "forwarding examination") which soon became a primary feature of the system. In contrast to the T'ang practice in which the number of "district tribute" scholars (*hsiang-kung*) sent to the capital was a function of the bureaucratic status of the prefecture, the Sung initially allowed prefectures to send up all candidates who achieved qualifying levels in their prefectural test. However, when *chü-jen* numbers threatened to get out of hand, this was changed to a ratio of two candidates in ten in 997, and then twelve years later to a system of set prefectural quotas based upon quota ratios and average candidate numbers from recent examinations (there were separate quotas for *chin-shih* and *chu-k'o* candidates). This was not a rigid system, for imperial action to change the quotas of individual prefectures was common and subject to political considerations. Even when general recalculations of quotas were ordered, exceptions were made which favored specific localities and even whole regions; for example, quotas for border areas, northern prefectures, and K'ai-feng were consistently more lenient than those for southeastern prefectures. The end result, in any case, was the development of a fully articulated initial or qualifying examination at the prefectural level which, as competition increased, came to constitute even more of a hurdle to the aspiring literatus than the departmental and palace examinations at the capital.¹⁴

Second, in a series of measures spanning the years 992 to 1041 the early emperors sought to guarantee the fairness of the examinations by making the papers read by the examiners (examination administrators, *chih kung-chü*) anonymous. Beginning in 992, slips of paper were placed and sealed over the candidates' names in the palace examination papers. This practice, known as "covered names" (*feng-mi* or *hu-ming*), was extended to the departmental examinations in 1007 and to the prefectural examinations in 1033.¹⁵ A concern that examiners might still recognize a candidate's calligraphy and be partial in their grading led to the further measure of having clerks copy out all examinations (*t'eng-lu*) before they went to the examiners, which was instituted at the palace and departmental examinations in 1015 and at the prefectures in 1037.¹⁶ Finally, in 1041 the venerable practice of candidates sending

¹⁴ SHY (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 14, pp. 13a–20b *passim*. Two quite different analyses of the Sung quota system can be found in Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning*, pp. 52–3, 98–105, 124–5; and Thomas H. C. Lee (Li Hung-ch'i), "The social significance of the quota system in Sung civil service examinations," *Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) 13 (1982), pp. 287–318. For a shorter version of Lee's argument, see also his *Government education and examinations*, pp. 156–60.

¹⁵ SHY (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 7, p. 5b; 3, p. 8b; 15, p. 9a; HCP (1965) 33, p. 2a; 67, pp. 15b–16a. For a detailed treatment of these measures, see Araki, *Sōdai kakyo*, pp. 22–3, 208–14, and 243–66.

¹⁶ Wang Ying-lin, *Yü-hai* (1266; Taipei, 1967) 116, p. 21a–b; 116, p. 31a; Togto (T'o T'o) et al., eds., *Sung shih* (Peking, 1977) (hereafter SS (1977)) 155, p. 9a; SHY (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 15, p. 10a.

examiners compositions called “public essays” (*kung-chüan*) so that the latter could “select those with reputations” was banned, for covered names and copied examinations had rendered it irrelevant.¹⁷

These innovations had as a common goal the achievement of the greatest possible fairness or impartiality (*kung*) in the selection process – in part, at least, out of a concern that established powerful families not be allowed to dominate it – and they profoundly altered the nature of the examinations. The T’ang examination system had not only permitted examiners to be acquainted with the candidates, but demanded it on the grounds that virtue and good behavior (*te-hsing*) were more important than talent (*ts’ai*) in the selection of officials.¹⁸ The Sung system did not altogether ignore considerations of character – as we shall see below, candidates were required to have guarantees attesting to their good character and the respectability of their backgrounds – but these were prerequisites which played no part in the selection process itself. The written word thus reigned supreme.

THE CH’ING-LI REFORMS

The anonymous examinations did not lack for critics, who felt that the quest for impartiality had been carried too far. The first serious challenge to them occurred in the third year of the Ch’ing-li era (1043) of the Emperor Jen-tsung (r. 1022–63), when a group of exceptional scholar-officials led by the idealistic southerner Fan Chung-yen (989–1052) and Han Ch’i (1008–75), a northern aristocrat, came briefly to power. They were committed to using Confucian principles to confront the problems of the day, and in the Ten Point Memorial (*tsu-i*) submitted at Jen-tsung’s request prior to their elevation called for reforms on a wide variety of issues such as local administration, personnel policy, and law, which are treated elsewhere in this volume. Central to the memorial, however, were proposals for the reform of the examinations, which merit our consideration here.¹⁹

The Ch’ing-li reformers had two basic objections to the contemporary examinations: first, that they had become excessively concerned with

¹⁷ HCP (1965) 133, p. 3a.

¹⁸ Penelope Ann Herbert, “Civil service recruitment in early T’ang China: Ideal and reality,” *Gengo bunka kenkyu* (*Studies in Language and Culture*) 12 (1986), p. 201. See also the treatment by Thomas H. C. Lee (Li Hung-ch’i) of T’ang *kung-chüan* in *Education in traditional China: A history* (Leiden, 2000), pp. 581–3, which emphasizes its role in creating master–disciple relationships between examiners and the successful candidates.

¹⁹ HCP (1965) 143, pp. 1b–14a. The standard study in English on the Ch’ing-li reforms is that of James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien), “An early Sung reformer: Fan Chung-yen,” in *Chinese thought and institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago, 1967), pp. 105–31. For recent studies of Fan in Chinese, see Ch’ên Jung-chao, *Fan Chung-yen yen-chiu* (Hong Kong, 1987); Li Han and Liu Ching-hua, *Fan Chung-yen chuan* (Cheng-chou, 1991); and Fang Chien, *Fan Chung-yen p’ing-chuan* (Nan-ching, 2001).

impartiality, and second, that they rewarded candidates for the wrong skills, specifically, poetical composition in the *chin-shih* examination and memorization in the *chu-k'o* examinations. Concerning the first, they proposed that anonymous procedures be abandoned and a candidate's character be a consideration in the qualifying examinations, so as to insure that the *chü-jen* at the departmental examination would all be virtuous as well as talented. As to the second, they suggested that the *chin-shih* examination be reordered so that the sessions on discussions and policy questions precede that on poetry, which traditionally had come first, so as to give greater weight to the former, and that *chu-k'o* candidates also be examined on the general meaning of the Classics (*ta-i*).²⁰

In the spring of 1044 the reformers submitted a memorial devoted exclusively to educational matters, which covered the points mentioned above but also made two more radical proposals. First, it was suggested that an initial cut be made in the departmental examination after the discussion and policy sessions, thus further de-emphasizing the importance of poetry. Second, they proposed the establishment of an empire-wide system of schools. All prefectures without prefectural schools (*chou-hsiieh*) were to start them, and counties with two hundred or more students were to establish county schools (*hsien-hsiieh*) as well. Preceptors (*chiao-shou*) selected jointly by the fiscal intendant and prefect were to be appointed to three-year terms at the prefectural schools. Moreover, to sit for the qualifying examinations, a candidate would either have had to have spent 300 days in residence at a school (100 for former *chü-jen*), or be guaranteed by either an official or three *chü-jen* who had sat for the departmental examination.²¹ Finally, a related proposal submitted a month later suggested the establishment of an independent Imperial University (*T'ai-hsiieh*) to provide instruction for the children of commoners and low-ranking officials (those of higher-ranking officials going, as before, to the Directorate school).²²

Although initially accepted, these reforms proved short-lived, for by the summer of 1044 the reform leaders found themselves ousted by their rivals and demoted to regional posts. Only the Imperial University survived the retrenchment, and even it was placed under the supervision of the Directorate of Education.²³ The reforms were nevertheless important, in large part because of the emphasis they gave to government schools.

One departure by the early Sung emperors from T'ang precedent was that they did not call for an empire-wide system of schools. The government's educational activities outside the capital were confined to occasional

²⁰ HCP (1965) 143, pp. 5b-7b.

²¹ SHY (1964) *Hsiian-chü* 3, pp. 23b-30a.

²² HCP (1965) 148, p. 14a; WHTK (1964) 42, p. 395.

²³ WHTK (1964) 42, p. 395.

donations of sets of the Nine Classics (*chiu-ching*) printed by the Directorate of Education to local schools and academies (*shu-yüan*), most notably to the White Deer Grotto Academy (*Pai-lu-tung shu-yüan*) in modern Kiangsi (formerly the Mount Lu National School); the Yüeh-lu Academy (Mountain Slope or Marchmount Hill Academy) in Ch'ang-sha, Hu-nan; and the Ying-t'ien-shan Academy (*Ying-t'ien-shan ching-she*) and Sung-yang Academy (also known as Sung-shan) in Ho-nan.²⁴ Outside these academies, schooling continued as before in private homes, Buddhist schools and Confucian temples (*K'ung-tzu miao*, *Wen-hsüan wang miao*). But though the central government was inactive in schooling, among local officials there was a trend towards establishing local government schools, undoubtedly in response to the growing interest in the examinations. Such undertakings were accorded increased importance when in 1022 the central government endowed the prefectural school at Yen-chou (in Ching-tung-hsi) with ten *ch'ing* (about fifteen acres) of support fields and appointed a teacher to it,²⁵ but even before then government school foundings had become quite common, as can be seen in Table 4.

The Ch'ing-li call for the establishment of schools was thus not a new idea; its importance lay rather in the attention it focused upon the goal of a government school system, and even more in the linkage it proposed between schools and the examinations. "If teaching is not rooted in schools and scholars are not examined in villages, then it is impossible to investigate thoroughly the reality behind reputations," stated the 1044 memorial.²⁶ Although not then implemented, this proposed linkage proved the focal point for many of the educational debates of the later Northern Sung, and indeed Sung experiments with linkage were destined to set the pattern for the relationship between schools and examinations for subsequent dynasties.

POLICY DEBATES: QUOTAS AND CURRICULUM

In the years following the Ch'ing-li reforms attention shifted to two other issues: the geographical representation of *chin-shih* and the examination curriculum. The first took the form of a famous debate in 1064 between Ssuma Kuang (1019–86) and Ou-yang Hsiu (1007–72) and occurred against a backdrop of increasing southern domination in the examinations; southerners, who had accounted for less than 20 percent of *chin-shih* in the first two reigns (960–97), had increased to 50 percent under Jen-tsung and were to surpass

²⁴ SHY (1964) *Ch'ung-ju* 2, p. 2a–b. For the four academies, see WHTK (1964) 46, p. 431. See also the treatment of education in the early Northern Sung by Yuan Cheng, *Sung-tai chiao-yü: Chung-kuo ku-tai chiao-yü te li-shih-hsing chuan-che* (Canton, 1991), pp. 7–13.

²⁵ SHY (1964) *Ch'ung-ju* 2, p. 3a; HCP (1965) 99, p. 12a. ²⁶ SHY (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 3, p. 23b.

Table 4. *Sung government schools classified by earliest references per decade*

Period	Prefectural schools		County schools		Total schools	
	References	# per decade	References	# per decade	References	# per decade
Pre-Sung	45		52		97	
960-97	6	1.6	10	2.6	16	4.2
998-1021	10	4.2	22	9.2	32	13.4
1022-63	80	19.0	89	21.2	169	40.2
1064-85	32	15.0	36	16.4	68	31.4
1086-1100	5	3.3	32	21.3	37	24.6
1101-26	17	6.5	51	19.6	68	26.1
N. Sung Undated	3		37		40	
N. Sung Total	153	9.2	277	16.6*	430	25.8*
1127-62	13	3.6	49	13.6	62	17.2
1163-89	7	2.6	22	8.1	29	10.7
1190-1224	5	1.4	29	8.3	34	9.7
1225-64	4	1.0	25	6.2	29	7.2
1265-79	2	1.3	5	3.3	7	4.6
S. Sung Total	31	2.0	130	8.5	161	10.5
Sung undated	5		57		62	
Sung Total	189	5.9*	464	14.5*	653	20.4*
All Schools	234		516		750	

Source: John W. Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning in Sung China: A social history of examinations* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 75. For a precise listing of the primary sources used, see John W. Chaffee, "Education and examinations in Sung society (960-1279)" (diss., University of Chicago, 1979), Appendix 2.

* These figures include undated schools.

60 percent under Ying-tsung (r. 1064-7) and Shen-tsung (r. 1068-77).²⁷ Ssu-ma Kuang, a northerner, was alarmed by the inability of northern and western *chü-jen* to compete in the departmental *chin-shih* examinations, and cited figures from the departmental examinations of 1059, 1061, and 1063 which showed *chin-shih*-to-*chü-jen* ratios ranging from one in twenty-eight to one in 154, as compared to ratios for K'ai-feng and the Directorate of Education (which had its own qualifying examination) ranging from one in four to one in six. Ssu-ma's solution to this inequity was for quotas to be used in the departmental examinations determined by quota ratios, as in the prefectural examinations.²⁸

²⁷ Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning*, p. 134. These figures are based upon a compilation from local histories of *chin-shih* by prefecture and examination for all prefectures under Sung control. For the discussion, presentation, and analysis of the data, see chapter 6 and Appendices 3 and 4.

²⁸ Ssu-ma Kuang, *Wen-kuo wen cheng Ssu-ma kung wen-chi* (1132; *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* ed.) 30, pp. 1b-5a.

Ou-yang Hsiu, a southerner, responded to Ssu-ma's proposal with several arguments. He criticized the framing of the comparison solely in terms of *chin-shih* since the north, with its strong tradition of classical scholarship, was heavily represented among the *chu-k'o* graduates. He disparaged the educational level of *chü-jen* from backward regions such as Kuang-nan, implying that they did not deserve *chin-shih* status. He asserted that it was southeastern literati who suffered from discrimination, since their qualifying examinations were far more competitive than those in the north and west, so that setting departmental quotas would doubly discriminate against them. He also addressed a charge that the lack of *chin-shih* might cause northern literati to rebel, which had apparently been raised by other northerners, since Ssu-ma had not mentioned it. Pointing out that the north had no monopoly on rebels, Ou-yang went on to challenge the use of the examinations as a means of co-opting the literati: "The examinations were established basically to await those of sagely ability. For winning over lawless men there should be other methods which do not involve the examination hall."²⁹

Although Ssu-ma's proposal was not accepted, the debate was important, both as an expression of northern-southern tensions within the Sung bureaucracy, and even more because of the questions it raised concerning notions of fairness and the purposes of the examinations. Were southeasterners being discriminated against because their qualifying examinations were so difficult or because their *chü-jen* did so well in the departmental examination? Should the principle of fairness be applied to individuals or to regions? Most fundamentally, was the essential function of the examinations to select the most talented for office or to insure representation within the bureaucracy of key groups and regions?³⁰ The debate thus reveals an awareness of the examinations as a complex institution, fulfilling a variety of political and social functions. The choice to allow free competition without regional quotas at the departmental examinations was not made casually.

The status quo outcome of the debate benefited two groups of *chü-jen*: those from K'ai-feng and those from the south. Surprisingly, neither Ssu-ma nor Ou-yang explicitly criticized the role of K'ai-feng, for the large *chü-jen* quotas at both the prefectural and Directorate of Education examinations and their high pass ratios in the departmental examination allowed K'ai-feng to dominate the Northern Sung examinations (it accounted for close to half of all *chin-shih* degrees in the early 1060s).³¹ They and the southerners, discussed

²⁹ Ou-yang Hsiu, *Ou-yang wen chung kung chi* (Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an ed.) 113, pp. 8b-13a. The quotation is from p. 11b.

³⁰ The importance of the bureaucracy's representative function is strongly argued by Lo, *Civil service*, pp. 83-4, 100-2.

³¹ See Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning*, pp. 61-5.

earlier, therefore accounted for almost all of the *chin-shih* graduates, though it should be noted that *chu-k'o* graduates came largely from the north, which thus continued to be represented in the examinations. Nevertheless, because southern *chü-jen* could register and compete freely in the capital, they and the K'ai-feng *chü-jen* were able to dominate the *chin-shih* rolls in a way that became impossible in subsequent dynasties, when regional quotas were used in the capital examinations.³²

In contrast to the debate over quotas, which reaffirmed current practices, that over the examination curriculum resulted in far-reaching changes. The desire of the Ch'ing-li reformers to make the examinations more relevant to issues of government was very much alive in the succeeding decades. In 1057, Ou-yang Hsiu won acclaim and created controversy when as examination administrator in the departmental examinations he gave greater weight than was the custom to the discussion and policy-question answers, in the process failing a number of candidates who had expected to pass as well as passing several who went on to great fame.³³ More significantly, a new degree was created that year called "understanding the Classics" (*ming-ching*), which differed from the *chu-k'o* degrees by giving greater weight to a command of the "broad meanings" of the Classics.³⁴

WANG AN-SHIH'S REFORMS

These actions paled, however, in the face of the restructuring of the examination curriculum undertaken by the emperor Shen-tsung and his reformist chief councilor Wang An-shih (1021–86) in early 1071 as a part of Wang's ambitious New Policies (*Hsin-cheng*).³⁵ First, the *ming-ching* and *chu-k'o* degrees were abolished, the former immediately and the latter after the examination of 1073. Second, poetry (*shih* and *fu*), as well as the use of memory passages and written elucidations, were eliminated from the examinations. In their place candidates were to demonstrate a mastery of the *Analects* (*Lun-yü*) of Confucius (551–479 BC) and the works of Mencius (which had not

³² Edward A. Kracke Jr., "Region, family, and individual in the Chinese examination system," in *Chinese thought and institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago, 1967), pp. 262–5.

³³ *HCP* (1965) 185, p. 1a; *WHTK* (1964) 31, p. 290. Among those who passed that year were Tseng Kung (1019–83), Su Shih (1037–1101), and his brother Su Ch'e (1039–1112). For an analysis of the examination and its significance, see Peter K. Bol, "This culture of ours": *Intellectual transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford, 1992), pp. 191–4; and Tseng Tsao-chuang, *Wen-hsing ts'ui-ts'an: Pei Sung Chia-yu erb-nien kung-chü k'ao-lun* (Shanghai, 2010).

³⁴ *HCP* (1965) 186, pp. 12b–14a.

³⁵ Many of the elements of the restructuring had been proposed by Wang in a 1068 memorial. See Wang An-shih, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* (Hong Kong, 1971) 42, p. 450. On the New Policies, see the chapter by Paul Jakov Smith, "Shen-tsung's reign and the new policies of Wang An-shih, 1067–1085," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 5, Part 1: *The Sung dynasty and its precursors*, 907–1279, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge and New York, 2009), pp. 347–483.

previously been a part of the curriculum), as well as of one of the five Books of Poetry, History, Changes, Rites, and the Rites of the Chou. The *Spring and autumn annals* (*Ch'un-ch'iu*) was excluded, because Wang considered it to have little contemporary political value.³⁶ Finally, in an attempt to stress legal expertise, which had been lightly regarded in the *chu-k'o* examinations, a "new degree in law" (*hsin-k'o ming-fa*) was instituted later in 1071, and *ming-ching* and *chu-k'o chü-jen* were permitted to sit for it.³⁷

Although to a modern observer these reforms might not seem of great moment, in the Sung context they were radical, for they constituted the first major change in the content of the examinations in their 500-year history.³⁸ Wang's aim was the recruitment of officials who had thought deeply about problems of government and could be expected to support the cause of reform in which he was then engaged. To this end neither the rote memorization of texts nor accomplishment in literary composition had any place; rather it was in the study of the Classics that the lessons for government were to be learned. Moreover, to insure that the correct lessons would be learned, and that a "unified morality" (*i tao te*) be achieved, in 1075 the *New commentaries on the three classics* (*San-ching hsin-i*) (of Poetry, Documents, and the Rites of the Chou) written by Wang and his supporters were printed by the Directorate of Education, distributed to schools, and made a part of the examination curriculum.³⁹

The demand for greater relevance in the examinations was difficult to counter, and indeed the only prominent critic to speak out against the changes when they were introduced was Su Shih, who argued that the use of poetry had worked well in the past and that even discussion and policy-question essays were basically little more than literary exercises.⁴⁰ This did not indicate a lack of opposition to these changes, however. Given the fact that they disrupted the studies of both *chin-shih* candidates (predominantly southerners) through the elimination of poetry and of course *chu-k'o* candidates (mainly northerners),⁴¹ it is not surprising that, in the Yüan-yü era (1086–94) after Shen-tsung's death, when the antireform party came into power, many of these

³⁶ HCP (1965) 220, pp. 1a–2a; SHY (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 3, pp. 43b–44b. See also Chang Hsi-ch'ing, "Lun Wang An-shih te kung-chü kai-ko," *Pei-ching ta-hsüeh hsiieh pao* 116 No. 4 (1986), pp. 66–77, especially pp. 72–3 on the elimination of the *Spring and autumn annals*; Ning Hui-ju, *Pei-Sung chin-shih-k'e k'ao-shih nei-jung chih yen-pien* (Taipei, 1996), pp. 115–36; and Kondō Kazunari, "Ô An-seki no kakyō kaikaku o megutte," *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 46 No. 3 (December 1987), pp. 21–46.

³⁷ SHY (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 14, p. 1a–b. Candidates for the "new degree" were to use the prefectural *chu-k'o* quotas. Brian E. McKnight has an excellent treatment of this degree (and legal education generally) in "Mandarins as legal experts: Professional learning in Sung China," in *Neo-Confucian education: The formative stage*, ed. William Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee (Berkeley, 1989), pp. 493–515, especially pp. 500–2.

³⁸ Chang, "Lun Wang An-shih te kung-chü kai-ko," pp. 66, 77.

³⁹ HCP (1965) 265, pp. 24a–25a.

⁴⁰ WHTK (1964) 31, p. 293.

⁴¹ I have argued elsewhere (*The thorny gates of learning*, p. 71) that a geographical balancing can be seen behind these moves, since both southerners and northerners were affected by these changes. It should

changes were rescinded: poetry and the *Spring and autumn annals* were returned to the curriculum while Wang's *New commentaries* were banned. Although the *chu-k'ò* degrees were not revived, in 1089 the *chin-shih* was split into two sub-degrees, one in poetry and the other in Classics.⁴² In 1094, when the reformers returned to power, poetry and the *Spring and autumn annals* were again banned, but in 1127 the Yüan-yü system was returned to, and throughout the Southern Sung candidates had a choice of specializing in poetry or classics.

Yet another element to Wang An-shih's educational program was a belief in the fundamental importance of schools, particularly as a means of realizing his goal of a uniform morality and a moral officialdom. "In antiquity the selection of scholars was rooted in schools," he wrote in 1068. In the present day, however, the lack of a common education meant that for each ten men there were ten opinions. Thus, "to achieve a uniform morality, we must reform our schools, and if we wish to reform our schools, we must change the examination regulations."⁴³ To this end, fiscal intendants were instructed in 1071 to give each government school in their circuits ten *ch'ing* of land, schools were ordered to appoint teaching officials (*chiao-kuan*) or preceptors, and fifty-three preceptors were named by the court.⁴⁴ In 1175 a special examination was created for preceptors which further heightened their prestige.⁴⁵ Even more ambitious and innovative were the reforms undertaken in K'ai-feng. The Imperial University was expanded from its level of 200 students in 1051 to 900 hundred in 1068, 1,000 in 1071, and then 2,400 hundred in 1079.⁴⁶ It was also reorganized into three halls of grades (*san-she*), with students proceeding from the outer through the inner to the upper hall, graduation from which would qualify one to be an official.⁴⁷

THE THREE HALL SYSTEM

During the antireform period of 1086–94, little was done to undo the institutional developments (as opposed to curricular changes) of the Shen-tsung period, but neither was much done to further encourage the development of

also be noted that past *chu-k'ò* candidates taking the *chin-shih* examination were given special treatment so as to ease their transition. *HCP* (1965) 220, p. 1b.

⁴² *SHY* (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 3, pp. 48b, 50b–51a. ⁴³ *WHTK* (1964) 31, p. 293.

⁴⁴ *SHY* (1964) *Ch'ung-ju* 2, p. 5a; *WHTK* (1964) 46, p. 232; *HCP* (1965) 220, pp. 1a–2b; 221, p. 5a.

⁴⁵ See Thomas H. C. Lee's excellent treatment of the varying provisions for the examination and appointment of preceptors beginning with the 1075 examination. *Government education and examinations*, pp. 116–24.

⁴⁶ Wang Chien-ch'iu, *Sung-tai t'ai-hsüeh yü t'ai-hsüeh-sheng* (Taipei, 1965), pp. 108–11.

⁴⁷ Very few actually did so. It was much more common for University students to become officials via the examinations, and they had the privilege of sitting for the Directorate's qualifying examination. See *SS* (1977) 165, pp. 3910–11, for a description of the University's organization under Shen-tsung.

schools. With the return of the reform party to power after 1094, however, educational reform moved, albeit gradually, into its third and most ambitious phase. The first step in this direction occurred in 1099 when prefectural schools were directed to adopt the University's Three Hall System (*San-she-fa*).⁴⁸ Then, in 1102, a new emperor, Hui-tsung (r. 1100–26), and a new chief councilor, Ts'ai Ching (1046–1126) attempted to do what both the Ch'ing-li reformers and Wang An-shih had discussed but not attempted, namely to combine schools and the examinations and make the schools the locus of both instruction and recruitment.

The Three Hall System, as this new system came to be called, was a unified, hierarchical school system stretching from counties to the capital and from primary schools (which were to be founded in each county) through county schools and prefectural schools to the University. Entry into the system was by examination and one advanced from hall to hall – county and prefectural schools all used the three-hall organization – and level to level based upon one's performance in monthly, quarterly and annual tests, as well as personal evaluations and the recommendations of one's teachers. Those who achieved promotion – quotas determined the numbers advancing at each stage – from their prefectural schools went first to the Pi-yung, the University's outer hall, which had been given a separate campus to the south of the city, and if they did well there they were promoted to the University proper, which consisted of the inner and upper halls. Those who graduated out of the upper hall (anywhere from ten to sixty men a year) received official rank, but the more common route to office continued to be the triennial departmental and palace examinations. However, only students at the University (including the Pi-yung) and the small Directorate school for the children of high officials could sit for the departmental examination, the qualifying examinations having been supplanted. Finally, to supervise the Three Hall System outside the capital, education intendants (*t'i-chü hsiieh-shih*) were appointed to each circuit.⁴⁹

In 1106 the reformers introduced another noteworthy innovation. This was the "eight virtues" (*pa hsing*) method of selection, which provided for the

⁴⁸ SHY (1964) *Ch'ung-ju* 2, p. 7a.

⁴⁹ The system is spelled out in Ts'ai Ching's memorial of 1102. SHY (1964) *Ch'ung-ju* 2, pp. 7b–9a. The most complete study of it to date is Yongguang Hu, "Cultivating merit: The Three Hall System in late Northern Song China" (diss., Binghamton University, 2011), a treatment that also provides an excellent account of the development of government schools prior to Hui-tsung's reign. See also Edward A. Kracke Jr., "The expansion of educational opportunity in the reign of Hui-tsung of the Sung and its implications," *Sung Studies Newsletter* 13 (1978), pp. 6–30; Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning*, pp. 77–84; Tilemann Grimm, "The inauguration of *T'i-chü hsiieh-shih ssu* (education intendants) during the Northern Sung dynasty," in *Études Song: Sung studies in memoriam Étienne Balazs*, ed. Françoise Aubin (Paris, 1976), pp. 259–74, and Kondō Kazunari, "Zai Kyō no kakyō gakko seisatsu," *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 53 No. 1 (June 1994), pp. 24–49.

selection and rapid promotion of students who had been recommended for their virtuous conduct, eight varieties of which were specified. Students so recommended spent a year in study at their prefectural school and then proceeded directly to the upper hall of the University, where they were, however, examined for the correctness of their views before being given official rank.⁵⁰ The "eight virtues" selection system clearly reflected the concerns and goals of the reformers, for while the Three Hall System as a whole attempted to balance considerations of character and ability in the selection of officials, this method considered character alone and was thus the diametrical opposite of the anonymous examinations.

Hui-tsung's Three Hall System was a remarkable educational experiment, unprecedented in its scope and size. The University grew to 3,800 students by 1103, the largest it was to reach in the Sung.⁵¹ Of these, 200 were in the upper hall, 600 were in the lower hall, and 3,000 in the Pi-yung or outer hall. Empire-wide, student numbers were reported at 210,000 in 1104, 167,622 in 1109 (not including students in the capital), and "over 200,000" in 1116, and school lands totalled over 100,000 *ch'ing* of land (over 1.5 million acres) in 1109.⁵² Although 200,000 students represented only a tiny fraction of the total population of around 100 million, from the perspective of the Sung upper classes it was very considerable, especially when one considers that even entrance to the schools was competitive. Not only was it an order of magnitude greater than the 20,000 to 30,000 taking the examinations in the early eleventh century, but it was over double reported figures of 70,000 to 80,000 taking the examinations in 1088 and 79,000 at the turn of the twelfth century.⁵³

Robert M. Hartwell has argued persuasively that these late decades of the Northern Sung witnessed a great social change, as the bureaucratic elite of families which had dominated government for most of the eleventh century gave way to local elites which became represented in the bureaucracy as never before. This was a major transformation, involving changes in landownership – Hartwell speaks of a process of hitherto available land "filling up" in southern China to explain the emergence of these elites, which proved very long-lasting – marriage alliances, and casualties of factional strife. But the role of

⁵⁰ Huang I-chou et al., *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien shih-pu* (1881; Taipei, 1964) 27, pp. 4a–5a; WHTK (1964) 42, p. 433. One of the best treatments of the *pa-hsing* system is that of Wang, *Sung-tai t'ai-hsiieh yü t'ai-hsiieh-sheng*, pp. 34–43.

⁵¹ SS (1977) 157, p. 3663.

⁵² Huang et al., *Hsiü Tzu chih t'ung chien ch'ang pien shih pu* 24, pp. 15b–16a; Ko Sheng-chung, *Tan yang chi* (*Ch'ang chou hsien che i shu* 1884 ed.) 1, p. 2a; Anonymous, *Sung ta chao ling chi* (1131–62; Peking, 1962) 157, p. 593. The land figure is from Ko Sheng-chung (1072–1144).

⁵³ HCP (1965) 420, p. 6a; SHY (1964) *Hsiian-chü* 15, p. 29a–b.

the Three Hall System should also be recognized, for however much other factors may have played roles in the rise of families, educational success was the means by which they attained prominence, and clearly many more people were entering the path of learning in the expanded school system.⁵⁴

The Three Hall System was also important for its development of educational institutions. The rather simple Confucian temple schools of the early Sung had long since given way to larger and more complex institutions; the Three Hall System, however, provided an organizational regularity which was to set the pattern for later dynasties as well. Common features included a substantial walled campus with halls for ceremonies and lectures, a library, a printing shop, dormitories, offices for the teachers and staff, and a school kitchen, as well as gardens, ponds, and even an archery range. Beginning in 1103, local government education was under the supervision of education intendants (*t'i-chü hsüeh-shih*) in each circuit, who had special responsibilities for the personnel appointments and educational finances.⁵⁵ Prefectural schools were under the direction of a preceptor, a regular, executory-class official who as a rule had passed a special teacher's examination, and he oversaw a host of other teaching personnel, including the schoolmaster (*hsüeh-chang*), instructors (*chiao-yü*, *hsüeh-yü*), assistants (*chu-chiao*), rectors (*hsüeh-cheng*, *hsüeh-lu*), and dormitory heads (*chai-chang*), who were unranked and outside the civil service, and were generally drawn from the ranks of the local literati and students. Country schools and primary schools, under instructors (*chu-chiao*) and primary-school instructors (*hsiao-hsüeh chu-chiao*) respectively, mimicked the layout and organization of the prefectural schools, except that they were smaller and somewhat simpler. Other features of the local schools included the possession of school lands provided by the local government for the support of the teachers and registered students, periodic entrance examinations, a prescribed curriculum, and an elaborate schedule of tests.⁵⁶

In addition to the Imperial University, with its two campuses, K'ai-feng hosted a number of other educational institutions during the Hui-tsung years: presumably the prefectural and metropolitan county schools, though we have no records of them; a primary school (*hsiao-hsüeh*), which reported 1,000 students in ten dormitories in 1114;⁵⁷ and technical schools for the study of

⁵⁴ Robert M. Hartwell, "Demographic, political, and social transformations of China, 750-1550," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42 No. 2 (December 1982), pp. 405-25. Hartwell denies the importance of the examinations as an independent factor in the rise of the local gentry, as he terms the local elites (pp. 416-20). For a rebuttal of this position, see Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning*, pp. 10-13.

⁵⁵ Grimm, "The inauguration of *T'i-chü hsüeh-shih ssu* (education intendants)," pp. 259-74.

⁵⁶ See Lee, *Government and examinations*, chapter 5, especially pp. 107-37; and Terada Go, *Sōdai kyōikushi gaisetsu* (Tōkyō, 1965). The entrance examinations, it might be noted, became in Ming times the initial qualifying examinations in the multi-tiered examination system.

⁵⁷ SHY (1964) *Ch'ung-ju* 2, p. 22b; SS (1977) 157, p. 12a.

medicine, mathematics, painting, calligraphy, and the military, to train specialists in those fields.⁵⁸

The Three Hall System also had a darker side. Its rapid expansion and large scale gave rise to various abuses, and complaints abounded of waste, poor teaching, and improper activities. One blistering memorial from 1112 contended,

Those who supervise the prefectures and counties do not know that the fundamental aim of the court is specifically the education of great talent. They engage in [obtaining] plentiful food and drink and their abuses extend to converting [grain] from the real price to the market price. They engage in borrowing from students and their abuses extend to breaking laws and damaging culture. Many [cases] reach the courtroom, some [involving] violence against officials and some, encroachments on the people, yet none dare to question [them]. They engage in [buying] superfluous decorations and so have useless expenditures of funds and provisions. They engage in applying for bequests and so there is the evil of quarreling with the people over profits.⁵⁹

The "eight virtues" selection system was also the source of many complaints, directed particularly at its lack of academic rigor, and these continued even after its academic requirements were strengthened somewhat in 1113. Most serious, however, were the steps taken by Ts'ai Ching to assure orthodoxy and intellectual conformity. Not only were Wang An-shih's *New commentaries* revived in the curriculum and the *Spring and autumn annals* again prohibited (along with the use of poetry in examinations), but private teaching outside the government schools was also prohibited and in the schools special "isolation rooms" (*tzu-sung-chai*) were established where students with unorthodox ideas were sent for punishment. In addition, the government moved to bar from office all opponents of reform and to ban their writings, a move which helped to insure that when the pendulum swung again, the reformers would themselves be vilified.

And swing it did. In 1121 the greater part of the Three Hall System was dismantled; local schools were ordered to return lands to the local governments, the preliminary examinations were again separated from the schools, and poetry was returned to the *chin-shih* curriculum.⁶⁰ In early 1126, with an increasingly desperate military situation in the north, a university student by the name of Ch'en Tung (1086–1127) led seven demonstrations in front of the palace to protest the court's wastefulness and lack of military preparedness. Growing in size from a handful to many thousands, these demonstrations provided dramatic evidence of the political influence of students in the capital when they chose to become

⁵⁸ For a description of these schools and an analysis of their changing fortunes from 1102 to 1124, see Lee, *Government education and examinations*, pp. 91–103.

⁵⁹ SHY (1964) *Ch'ung-ju* 2, p. 18a. ⁶⁰ SHY (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 4, pp. 11b–12a; 15, pp. 30b–31a.

active.⁶¹ The fall of K'ai-feng and northern China to the Jurchen later that year later served to stigmatize the cause of reform and insured against the implementation of any comparable program of educational activism by the central government in the Southern Sung.

THE EARLY SOUTHERN SUNG: SURVIVAL AND RECONSTRUCTION

The dynastic crisis caused by the Jurchen invasion and conquest of northern China in 1126–7 and the ensuing Sung–Chin war (*Sung–Chin chih chan*) which lasted until 1142 left little room for educational concerns. Schooling and the recruitment of officials were understandably slighted when the very survival of the dynasty was at stake. There were limits on the amount of neglect that could be tolerated, however, especially with regard to recruitment. The dynasty needed the bureaucratic manpower and, more important, it needed to show its subjects that it was still functioning and looking to the future. Thus the examinations were held every three, or at most four, years throughout the war, in 1128 (they had previously been held in 1124), 1132, 1135, 1138, and 1142.

This was an impressive accomplishment, for the war and concurrent local rebellions had unsettled large portions of the Sung domains, making travel difficult and dangerous. The loss of the past examination records from K'ai-feng posed major problems for the reconstitution of the examinations, and added to this were the large numbers of refugee literati who had arrived from the north without personal documentation. In response to these problems, the government held circuit examinations (*lei-shih*) in place of the departmental examinations in 1128 and 1132, addressed the problem of records by reconstructing what they could from the available prefectural *chü-jen* lists and requiring guarantees from officials for any candidates who lacked documents, and created special refugee examinations (*liu-yü-shih*) for refugee literati which kept them out of competition with native literati for the prefectural *chü-jen* places.⁶²

SOUTHERN SUNG GOVERNMENT SCHOOLING

Following the peace settlement with the Chin (1115–1234) in 1142, the government again turned its attention to education.⁶³ The ensuing reforms

⁶¹ See Lee, *Government education and examinations*, pp. 190–2; and, more recently, *Education in traditional China: A history*, pp. 646–9, which is part of a long chapter on “Students and student movements” (chapter 6). After the fall of K'ai-feng, Ch'en Tung made his way south and continued with his harsh criticisms of the court until his execution in 1127.

⁶² See SHY (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 4, pp. 17b–18a, 23a–b; 16, pp. 2a–4b; and John W. Chaffee, “Examinations during dynastic crisis: The case of the early Southern Song,” *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies* 37 (2007), pp. 135–60.

⁶³ In 1138 one Yeh Ch'en (1102–58) had proposed the re-establishment of schools, but the idea was shelved due to the critical military situation. SS (1977) 157, p. 3669.

under Chief Councilor Ch'in Kuei (1090–1155) were modest in comparison with those of the Northern Sung but nevertheless significant. Most prominent among them was the reconstitution of the Imperial University at the temporary capital in Lin-an (Northern Sung Hang-chou). Using the confiscated estate of Yüeh Fei (1103–42), the war hero whom Ch'in had had put to death, the University reopened in 1142 with a student quota of 300 (this was increased to 700 the next year) and using the three-halls organization as before.⁶⁴ Local education was also stressed. The appointment of preceptors in all prefectures was repeatedly ordered; the right of local officials to appropriate educational funds for other uses was constrained; and, in 1148, all counties without government schools were told to establish them and to assign *chin-shih*-holding local officials to double as instructors.⁶⁵ Finally, the government announced in 1143 that examination candidates would henceforth have to have attended at least six months in a government school and participated in two district wine-drinking ceremonies, an ancient community ritual which some scholars were trying to revive.⁶⁶

This flurry of activity constituted the central government's only attempt in the Southern Sung to carry out an empire-wide educational program,⁶⁷ and it was only partially successful. There is no evidence from other sources to indicate that the drinking-ceremony requirement was ever enforced. Much the same could also be said about the school-residency requirements, though it should be noted that entrance into the Imperial University was linked to prefectural school attendance throughout the Southern Sung. The precise requirements varied over time, but generally admission to the University's entrance examination was limited to *chü-jen* who had not passed the departmental examination *and* to those who had either graduated from or been recommended by their prefectural schools.⁶⁸

The revived University proved a success, however. In 1148 its student quota was raised to 1,000 and in the thirteenth century over 1,600 had reportedly enrolled,⁶⁹ and its qualifying examination offered a coveted route to the departmental examination. Perhaps most significant was the political activism

⁶⁴ SHY (1964) *Ch'ung-ju* 1, p. 32a–b; SS (1977) 157, pp. 3669–70. See Ch'ien Yüeh-yu, *Hsien-ch'ün Lin-an chib* (1268; Peking, 1990) 11, p. 3451, concerning the use of Yüeh's estate.

⁶⁵ SHY (1964) *Ch'ung-ju* 2, pp. 35a–38a. The order concerning the appointment of preceptors was given on at least three different occasions.

⁶⁶ SHY (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 16, p. 6a.

⁶⁷ Of course this later inactivity was not confined to education; the Southern Sung's antipathy to broad institutional reforms – a reaction, perhaps, to the reform controversies of the Northern Sung – has long been noted.

⁶⁸ Lee, *Government education and examinations*, pp. 80–2, provides an excellent summary of the changing entrance regulations.

⁶⁹ Wang, "Sung-tai t'ai-hsieh yü t'ai-hsieh-sheng," pp. 108–11.

of University students, which made them one of the most visible and often influential political groups in the empire. Throughout the Southern Sung, but most especially from the late twelfth century on, University students, sometimes joined by students from the other capital schools, took to the streets to protest the actions of local officials, or, more often, issues of foreign policy. These activities are described at length in Richard L. Davis's chapters in the companion chronological volume on the Sung. Here it is sufficient to note that the power of these demonstrations was sufficient to result, on occasion, in the dismissal of prefects and even chief councilors, and further that University students were prominent in the loyalist movement at the end of the Sung.⁷⁰

In contrast to the University, prefectural and county schools received little attention from the central government after the 1140s. This was not because they disappeared or declined, however, as some historians have suggested. To the contrary, local histories and literati writings depict an unprecedented degree of local educational activity, at least in those areas of southeastern China where such writings are concentrated. As seen in Table 4 above, many new county schools were created (most prefectures had probably already established schools in the Northern Sung). The encouragement of education increasingly came to be viewed as one of the expectations for model officials, so that local officials frequently co-operated with the local elite in expanding and renovating existing schools. Indeed, if one looks at all forms of constructive school projects rather than just the foundings of schools (Table 5), it is clear that the sustained local support of government education was far more common in the Southern Sung than it had been in the Northern Sung.⁷¹

More common does not mean better, however. As symbols of the official educational order, the government schools were frequently criticized for their impersonality and lack of educational value. The Neo-Confucian philosopher Chu Hsi (1130–1200), who as a local official actively promoted government schools, nevertheless had this to say about the huge prefectural school in Fu-chou (Fu-chien):

The prefectural school of Fu-chou is the largest in southeastern China, with hundreds of students. Yet in recent years its teaching and nourishment [of students] lacked rules. Teachers and students regarded each other indifferently, like men on the highway. Elders

⁷⁰ Thomas H. C. Lee (Li Hung-ch'i) has written extensively on the political activism of Sung University students. See "Life in the schools of Sung China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 37 No. 1 (November 1977), pp. 45–60; and most recently *Education in traditional China*, pp. 649–56. See also Gong Wei Ai (Chiang Wei-ai), "Ideal and reality: Student protests in Southern Sung China," in *Di-erb chieh Sung-shih hsiieh-shu yen-t'ao-hui lun-wen-chi* (Proceedings of the second symposium on Sung history), ed. Ti-erh-chieh Sung-shih hsiieh-shu yen-t'ao-hui lun-wen chi mi-shu-ch'u (Taipei, 1996), pp. 696–720.

⁷¹ See Richard L. Davis, "Custodians of education and endowment at the state schools of Southern Sung," *Journal of Song-Yuan studies* 25 (1995), pp. 95–119.

Table 5. *Incidence per decade of constructive activity at
64 prefectural and 108 county schools*

Period	Prefectural schools, incidence per decade	County schools, incidence per decade
960-97	1.8	0.5
998-1021	4.6	4.6
1022-40	13.2	4.7
1041-63	13.0	16.5
1064-85	9.5	13.2
1086-1100	5.8	7.7
1101-26	10.4	16.5
Northern Sung	8.1	9.1
1127-62	18.6	25.6
(1127-40)	(19.3)	(25.0)
(1141-62)	(13.6)	(15.4)
1163-89	19.2	24.0
1190-1207	14.4	20.0
1208-24	15.3	25.2
1225-40	15.0	23.1
1241-64	8.8	17.1
1265-79	6.0	4.0
Southern Sung	14.7	20.9
Total	11.3	14.8

Source: John W. Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning in Sung China: A Social history of examinations* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 87.

were concerned by the daily decline of ancient customs and the disappearance of scholarly spirit, but they were unable to remedy them.⁷²

Perhaps the most common charge levelled against the schools was that they had become mere appendages of the examinations. Wang Sui (*chin-shih* 1209) wrote that "schools are considered the business of officials and the examinations are the vocation of scholars, alas!"⁷³ Given the schools' institutional role in the University entrance examinations, noted earlier, and their examination-centered curriculum, the ties were strong and were not always viewed negatively. Southern Sung local historians commonly cited increased examination successes as evidence that school improvement projects had paid off. Others, however, despaired of the connection and turned instead to the academy, an old institution now given new meaning, as a way of returning education to its proper tasks.

⁷² Chu Hsi, *Chu Wen-kung wen chi* (Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'uan ed.) 80, p. 20b.

⁷³ Yü Hsi-lu, *Chib-shun Chen-chiang chib* (1332; Taipei, 1958) 11, p. 25b.

THE ACADEMY MOVEMENT

Although the famous academies of the early Northern Sung had either disappeared or merged with the growing government schools, *shu-yüan* as small schools or scholars' studies where teaching might occur on an informal basis continued unabated, even through the prohibitions on private schooling under Ts'ai Ching. In the later half of the twelfth century, however, the prominent revivals of several of the early Sung academies created a new interest in academies as educational and philosophical centers.⁷⁴ These revivals – of the Yüeh-lu Academy by Chang Shih (1133–80) in 1165, the White Deer Grotto Academy by Chu Hsi in 1179, and the Stone Drum Academy (*Shih-ku shu-yüan*) by Fan Chih (1126–89) in 1187 – were in part attempts to recall the glory of the Northern Sung and thereby further the revanchist cause of retaking the north which was then extremely popular in literati circles, and in part anti-Buddhist in their inspiration, since the popularity of Buddhism, especially Ch'an, was viewed with alarm by many. But their primary impetus came from the adherents to the Learning of the Way (*Tao-hsiieh*). As described in detail in Hoyt Tillman's chapter in this volume, Chang Shih, Chu Hsi, and Fan Chih, as well as their followers and imitators, looked to the eleventh-century teachings of the Ch'eng brothers (Ch'eng I and Ch'eng Hao) and argued that the Way (*tao*) of kingly government lay not with the government or emperor but in the correct study of the Classics. That study, they argued, had been corrupted by an educational system that looked to the wrong ends – the examinations – and the result was a crisis that went beyond education to challenge the very cultural order itself. For them the academy could serve as a corrective, a place where one could go and study for its own sake. Thus the restored Stone Drum Academy announced as its goal “accepting scholars from the four quarters who are resolved to study but despise classes and tests.”⁷⁵

From the mid to late Southern Sung, the idea of establishing academies – both *shu-yüan* and the less formal *ching-she* (halls of refinement) – took hold, and well over two hundred of them appeared (see Table 6). These varied considerably, from what were really scholars' studies and sacrificial halls to large

⁷⁴ Among the excellent Chinese studies of Sung academies, see Sheng Lang-hsi, *Chung-kuo shu-yüan chih-tu* (Shanghai, 1936; Taipei, 1978); Sun Yen-min, *Chung-kuo shu-yüan chih-tu chih yen-chiu* (Taipei, 1963); and most recently, Teng Hung-po, *Chung-kuo shu-yüan shih* (Shanghai, 2004). In English, the definitive work is now Linda A. Walton's *Academies and society in Southern Sung China* (Honolulu, 1999). See also John W. Chaffee, “Chu Hsi and the revival of the White Deer Grotto Academy, 1179–81 A.D.,” *T'oung-pao* 71 (1985), pp. 40–62; and also the articles by Wing-tsit Chan (Ch'en Jung-chieh), John W. Chaffee, Robert P. Hymes, and Linda A. Walton in *Neo-Confucian education: The formative stage*, ed. William de Bary and John W. Chaffee (Berkeley, 1989).

⁷⁵ Chu, *Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 79, p. 23a.

Table 6. *Geographical distribution of private schools*

Circuit	Academies*		Acad. per prefecture	Other private schools	All private schools
	<i>Shu-yüan</i>	<i>Ching-sbe</i>			
Southeast China					
Liang-che-tung	43	3	6.6	5	51
Liang-che-hsi	20	0	2.9	6	26
Chiang-nan-tung	46	3	5.1	4	53
Chiang-nan-hsi	90	3	9.0	2	95
Fu-chien	52	15	8.4	18	85
Central China					
Huai-nan-hsi	7	0	0.7	1	8
Ching-hu-nan	36	0	3.6	0	36
Ching-hu-pei	17	0	1.2	0	17
Ling-nan					
Kuang-nan-tung	34	0	2.3	1	35
Kuang-nan-hsi	14	0	0.5	0	14
Szechwan					
Ch'eng-tu fu	10	0	0.6	0	10
Tzu-chou	8	0	0.6	0	8
Li-chou	2	0	0.2	0	2
K'uei-chou	3	0	0.2	0	3
North China					
Ching-tung-tung	2	0	0.2	0	2
Ching-tung-hsi	3	0	0.3	2	5
Ching-hsi-pei	6	0	0.6	0	6
Ho-pei-hsi	3	0	0.2	0	3
Northwest China					
Ho-tung	1	0	0.04	0	1
Yung-hsing-chün	4	0	0.2	0	4
Totals	401	24	1.2 [†]	39	464

Source: John W. Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning in Sung China: A Social history of examinations* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 137. For the primary sources used, see John W. Chaffee, "Education and examinations in Sung society (960–1279)" (diss., University of Chicago, 1979), Appendix 2.

* Schools that began as *ching-sbe* but subsequently became *shu-yüan* have been classified as the former.

† Includes all Sung prefectures, not just those in the circuits for which we have records of private schools.

institutions that were almost indistinguishable from government schools.⁷⁶ However, the great majority of them seem to have been schools and their

⁷⁶ In his monograph on Sung schools, Yuan Cheng argues that Southern Sung academies were essentially government schools in terms of both their student bodies and the appointment of their teachers. *Sung-tai chia-yü*, pp. 233–9. My own view, as argued in "Education and examinations in Sung society

primary inspiration was Neo-Confucian. This is ironic, for the Learning of the Way was extremely controversial in the late twelfth century. Critics objected to the lofty rhetoric, snobbish manner and critical political stance taken by its adherents, particularly Chu Hsi and his followers, and in 1196 managed to secure an imperial prohibition of "spurious learning" (*wei-hsiieh*), identifying some fifty-nine individuals by name and barring all followers of "spurious learning" from the examinations.⁷⁷ This prohibition, however, did not long survive Chu Hsi's death in 1200. In 1202 it was lifted, and such was the growing prestige of the Neo-Confucians that the late Southern Sung court paid lip service to *Tao-hsiieh* and presented numerous academies with imperially inscribed plaques.⁷⁸ Thus the controversy in the long run served only to enhance the prestige of Neo-Confucianism and contributed to the popularity of the academies.

Two points can be made concerning the academies as schools. First, as an institution larger and more public than the village or family school and yet unofficial, the Southern Sung academy provided a literati-controlled alternative to the government school, and one which at times, at least, succeeded in generating genuine enthusiasm. The poet Yang Wan-li (1127–1206) described activities at the Dragon Lake Academy (*Lung-t'an shu-yüan*) in modern Hu-nan: "Every year they [the founders] invited famous teachers, and good friends and youths would gather daily for discourses and study. Literati arriving from afar usually numbered from scores to hundreds."⁷⁹ In another instance, at the early thirteenth-century Dragon Gorge Academy (*Lung-ch'i shu-t'ang*) in modern Kwangtung, it was said that "the reverberations of music and recitation made it seem as though one were in Tsou or Lu [the native states of Mencius and Confucius]."⁸⁰ Thus the Southern Sung academy may be viewed as a new and consequential addition to Chinese education – in

(960–1279)" (diss., University of Chicago, 1979), pp. 100–10, is that academies came in a variety of forms, and that while a few were formally incorporated into the government school system and many others had close connections with local government officials, most academies were founded and run by local scholar-officials and literati. For the distribution of academies, see Walton, *Academies and society*, pp. 87–118; and "The location of academies in Southern Sung China," in *Kuo-chi Sung shih yen-t'ao-hui lun-uen chi* (Transactions of the international symposium on Sung history), ed. Kuo-chi Sung shih yen-t'ao-hui mi-shu-ch'u (Taipei, 1988), pp. 185–222.

⁷⁷ See Conrad Schirokauer, "Neo-Confucians under attack: The condemnation of *wei-hsiieh*," in *Crisis and prosperity in Sung China*, ed. John Winthrop Haeger (Tucson, 1975), pp. 163–98. John W. Chaffee, "Chu Hsi in Nan-k'ang: *Tao-hsiieh* and the politics of education," in *Neo-Confucian education: The formative stage*, ed. William Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee (Berkeley, 1989), pp. 414–31, treats the early stages of the "spurious learning" controversy and its connection with the White Deer Grotto Academy revival.

⁷⁸ These are detailed in Terada, *Sōdai kyōikushi gaisetsu*, pp. 311–17. For a general treatment of the rise of Neo-Confucianism, see James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien), "How did a Neo-Confucian school become the state orthodoxy?" *Philosophy East and West* 23 No. 4 (October 1973), pp. 483–505.

⁷⁹ Yang Wan-li, *Ch'eng-chai chi* (*Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* ed.) 74, p. 4a–b.

⁸⁰ Cited by Sun, *Sung-tai shu-yüan*, p. 66.

Ming times especially academies provided a key focus for literati political activities – though it should be noted that its autonomous character was weak, for the government frequently co-opted academies or even incorporated them into the official educational structure.

Second, as Linda A. Walton has argued persuasively in her book on Southern Sung academies, the academies had an important religious aspect. They were typically located in the countryside and were frequently associated with shrines to worthies – often earlier *Tao-hsiieh* masters – and served as pilgrimage centers.⁸¹

Third, the spread of academies, by increasing the availability of education, undoubtedly contributed to the Sung's examination culture. It should be noted that Learning of the Way adherents did not object to the examinations per se, but only to focusing one's study on them to the exclusion of moral education,⁸² and in at least one instance a thirteenth-century academy that subscribed to Chu Hsi's articles of instruction from the White Deer Grotto Academy also had as a part of its curriculum time for examination preparation.⁸³ Thus there is little to suggest that the academy movement, with its critical attitude towards the examinations, did anything to undermine their centrality in the lives of the literati.

EXAMINATIONS IN THE SOUTHERN SUNG

By the Southern Sung the examination system had, without question, become a central focus of literati life. Once the crisis of the early Southern Sung had passed and the dynasty had re-established itself in Lin-an (Hang-chou), examination preparation picked up and dwarfed that of the Northern Sung. Where the schools and examinations had collectively involved some 200,000 literati in the late Northern Sung, by the mid-Southern Sung an estimated 400,000 candidates sat for the triennial examinations in a much smaller empire, and, in the most developed and cultured prefectures of the southeast, candidates sitting for the examinations frequently constituted between 2 and 7 percent of the adult male population.⁸⁴ For the aspiring literatus, the examinations

⁸¹ Walton, *Academies and society*, pp. 50–86. See also Ellen G. Neskari, *Politics and prayer: Shrines to local former worthies in Sung China* (Cambridge, MA, 2001).

⁸² One revealing action taken by Chu Hsi after restoring the White Deer Grotto Academy was to invite the local *chü-jen* to the academy so as to prepare for the examinations with the proper frame of mind. Li Ying-sheng and Mao Te-ch'i, *Pai-lu shu-yüan chib*, in *Pai-lu-tung shu-yüan ku-chib wu-chung*, ed. Pai-lu-tung shu-yüan ku-chih cheng-li wei-yüan-hui (1622 plus later addenda, Ch'ing ed.; Peking, 1995) 2, pp. 10b–11a.

⁸³ Chou Ying-ho, *Ching-ting Chien-k'ang chib* (1261; 1801 ed.) 28, pp. 5b–6a.

⁸⁴ See Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning*, pp. 35–41. For the reasoning behind the 400,000 estimate, which is based upon conservative assumptions, see Chaffee, "Education and examinations in Sung society," pp. 57–9.

constituted a challenge measured more frequently in decades than in years. It began with his early education, as he mastered first the essentials of the language and then the Classics and histories. Not everyone studied the same texts, however, for the Southern Sung examinations required that candidates specialize. In the three-day, three-session examinations, everyone sat for the same discussion (*lun*) and policy-question (*ts'e*) sessions, but for the third session one was tested either on poetry composition (rhymed poetry, *shih*, and poetic prose, *fu*, or poetic prose alone) or on an individual classic: the *Spring and autumn annals*, the *Rites of the Chou*, and the Books of *Changes*, *History*, *Rites* and *Poetry*. From the *chin-shih* list of 1256, which gives the specialization of each individual, we know that poetry accounted for just over half of the total, with the other half divided among the various Classics.⁸⁵ In contrast to the Northern Sung *chu-k'o* degrees, however, these specialties had no career significance for those who received a *chin-shih* degree and went on into the civil service.

Examination preparation in the Southern Sung differed dramatically from that in the Northern Sung in one important respect. Fierce competition, the huge growth in candidate numbers, and the spread of private printers together gave rise to new genres of literature whose purpose was to prepare students for the examinations. The encyclopedias, anthologies, and writing manuals that appeared were often aimed at helping students with particular sessions, such as the discussions or policy questions, but their significance went beyond that. As Hilde De Weerdts has shown, they also served as forums for philosophical contestation, most notably between advocates of Learning of the Way, who in the late twelfth century were led by Chu Hsi, and Eastern Ch'ing or Yung-chia Learning, as represented by such thinkers as Lü Tsu-ch'ien (1137–81) and Yeh Shih (1150–1223). Indeed, De Weerdts argues persuasively that the ascendancy of Learning of the Way was due, in no small part, to its domination of the examination curriculum in the thirteenth century.⁸⁶ But whether or not one accepts this conclusion, clearly the examinations had spawned a complex and important literary culture, whose primary purpose was to aid in the examination endeavors of the hundreds of thousands of examination candidates.⁸⁷

Students typically began taking the prefectural examinations, which were held every third autumn, in their late teens. The very lucky passed them and

⁸⁵ Hsü Nai-ch'ang, ed., *Sung Yüan k'o-chü san lu* (1923 ed.). Among the Classics, the *Book of documents* accounted for 18 percent and the others approximately 6 percent each. See John W. Chaffee, "Status, family and locale: An analysis of Sung examination lists," in *Ryū Shiken hakase shōju kinen Sōshi kenkyū ronshū*, ed. Kinugawa Tsuyoshi (Kyōto, 1989), pp. 341–56.

⁸⁶ Hilde De Weerdts, *Competition over content: Negotiating standards for the civil service examinations in imperial China* (1127–1279) (Cambridge, MA, 2007).

⁸⁷ This is the focus of Lin Yen's excellent study: *Pei Sung k'o-chü k'ao-shih yü wen-hsiieh* (Shanghai, 2006).

the departmental and palace examinations the following spring and began their official careers in their early twenties. However, the mean age for receiving a *chin-shih* degree was thirty-six years and it was not uncommon for men to keep trying into their fifties and sixties.⁸⁸

By Southern Sung times the process of traversing these many tortuous stepping stones to success had become articulated and complex. To even sit for the prefectural examinations required a family guarantee certificate (*chia chuang*, *chia pao chuang*), attesting to the good character of the individual and his family, and to their long-standing residence in the prefecture, and this had to be guaranteed by local officials or other respectable individuals. The examinations were held in examination halls (*kung-yüan*) – a Southern Sung innovation – large complexes consisting of ceremonial halls, offices, and a myriad simple cubicles for the candidates. These had large staffs of gatekeepers, servants, proctors, copyists, and examiners and operated according to detailed regulations.⁸⁹ Competition was severe; in 1156 prefectural quotas throughout the empire were supposed to be set at one-hundredth of the average number of candidates in recent examinations, but in many parts of the southeast there were several hundred candidates for each *chü-jen* position, and reports of five, ten and even twenty thousand candidates in a single prefecture were not uncommon.⁹⁰

The few who passed the prefectural examinations were feted and feasted, but they also faced the problem of how to get to the capital for the departmental examinations some months hence, as that trip was often long, difficult and dangerous, not to mention expensive. *Chü-jen* from Szechwan had a somewhat easier task, for because of the great distance of that region from Lin-an and its special administrative needs, throughout the Southern Sung a separate departmental examination, the *lei-sheng-shih*, was held in Ch'eng-tu (*Ch'eng-tu-fu*).⁹¹ As for other *chü-jen*, recognition of the costs of travel, together with hopes for the success of native scholars, caused many prefectures to create examination estates, endowed funds providing travel allowances to *chü-jen* and at times even candidates for the Imperial University's entrance examination.⁹²

⁸⁸ This, at least, was the average in 1148 and 1256, the only two years for which we have reliable data. Hsü, *Sung Yüan k'o-chü san lu*.

⁸⁹ For example, in 1177 the Directorate of Education printed prefectural examination regulations consisting of "several score provisions." SHY (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 16, p. 21a-b.

⁹⁰ Li Hsin-ch'uan, *Chien-yen i-lai hsi nien yao-lu* (Taipei, 1968) 172, p. 11a (p. 2833), for the 1156 action. Concerning examination competition, see Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning*, pp. 29-41.

⁹¹ See Araki, *Sūdai kakyo seido kenkyū*, pp. 238-42; and Lo, *Civil service*, pp. 96-7.

⁹² The pioneering article on this practice, which remained important through the Ch'ing, is Yang Lien-sheng's "K'o-chü shih-tai te fu-k'ao lü-fei wen-t'i," *Ch'ing-bua hsiieh pao*, new series No. 2 (1961), pp. 116-30.

The departmental examination in Lin-an was like those in the prefectures except that the requirements were more rigorous and the procedures more complex. *Chü-jen* upon arriving were supposed to go first to the Ministry of Rites to have their credentials examined and stamped, and, when they sat the examination, elaborate precautions were used to insure the anonymity of each examination paper. As in the prefectures, there were day-long sessions for each of the three fields. However, those passing were then subjected to a re-examination (*fu-shih*) involving one discussion session which they had to pass before going on to the palace examination.⁹³

This examination season in Lin-an was a major event for that teeming metropolis, not only politically but also socially, economically, and even demographically. Since the University entrance examination was held at the same time as the departmental examination, 30,000 to 40,000 literati could appear at once. The claim of one thirteenth-century source that 100,000 literati appeared in years when the University held open entrance examinations seems exaggerated, but not too much so, for we know that by the early thirteenth century the entrance examination alone was drawing as many as 37,000.⁹⁴ The same source does go on to describe in detail how Buddhist and Taoist temples had to serve as hostels, how all education establishments in the city had to double as examination halls (in addition to the three formal halls), and how the population was further swelled by the fact that most candidates brought their own servants.⁹⁵ Wu Tzu-mu (c.1256–after 1334), writing in the early Yüan (1260–1368), also describes the examination activities, with candidates congregating around the examination halls, renting rooms in their vicinities when possible, buying materials for the examinations (including chairs), and studying the examination seating charts. He concludes,

This examination is held once every three years and the literati arriving for the departmental examination are never less than ten thousand men, who congregate within the city walls. Their feasting and trading make it seem like the marketplace, and what is colloquially known as “the life of pursuing the examinations for office” fulfills the needs of this [examination] time.⁹⁶

For those who passed all of the tests there followed a period of lavish ceremonies and festivities, making readily apparent the fruits of the many years of study they had endured. The graduates were ranked into five classes, with those in the first two designated as having “passed with distinction” (*chi-ti*), those in the third said to have “formally qualified” (*ch’u-shen*), and those in the fourth

⁹³ Wu Tzu-mu, *Meng-liang lu*, in *Tung ching meng hua lu: Wai ssu chung* (Taipei, 1980) 2, p. 146–7.

⁹⁴ SHY (1964) *Ch’ung-ju* 1, p. 39a; CYTC *chia* 13, pp. 179–80.

⁹⁵ Anonymous, *Hsi hu lao jen fan sheng lu*, in *Tung ching meng hua lu: Wai ssu chung* (Taipei, 1980), p. 117.

⁹⁶ Wu, *Meng-liang lu*, p. 247.

and fifth – the largest by far – being said to have “passed” (*t’ung ch’u-shen*).⁹⁷ As vividly described by Chou Mi (1232–98), a Lin-an native, the new graduates were announced personally by the emperor and given imperial gifts – with special recognition going to the top-ranked examinee, the *chuang-yüan*, together with the second- and third-place men – and going through a number of ceremonies, formal and informal. (Among the latter was the *chuang-yüan* bowing to honor the oldest of the new *chin-shih*, and the youngest doing likewise to the *chuang-yüan*.) Perhaps most interesting, however, is Chou’s description of the public’s reaction:

From the Gate of Eastern Flowers to the banquet hall, [people] at the noble estates of powerful families crowd about their colored curtains to view [the graduates], and those who are young and unmarried are often selected as sons-in-law at this time.⁹⁸

At the departmental examination the government used a selection ratio of between one in fourteen and one in seventeen,⁹⁹ which meant that for candidates from the more competitive prefectures the odds of receiving a *chin-shih* degree could be one in three thousand or worse.¹⁰⁰ It should be noted that *chü-jen* were usually exempted from having to retake the preliminary examinations for the following several examinations, and even if they did not pass the departmental examination they had a good chance of eventually receiving a facilitated degree. Nevertheless, the odds of obtaining a *chin-shih* degree remained extremely low, and as a result great efforts and ingenuity were applied to trying to beat the system through various means.

Some were illegal. A complaint from 1213 listed twelve separate examination abuses, among which were bribery, buying answer sheets, passing messages into and out of the hall, the use of cribs, taking the examination in someone else’s name, and either purchasing or falsifying one’s documents, such as the family certificate.¹⁰¹ This last is interesting, for one form of cheating involved literati from prefectures where the competition was severe going to less competitive prefectures and falsely claiming residence there, thereby improving one’s odds.¹⁰² Just how much of a problem cheating was is hard

⁹⁷ These class rankings and designations dated to the early Sung, and the translations follow Edward A. Kracke Jr., *Civil service in early Sung China, 960–1067: With particular emphasis on the development of controlled sponsorship to foster administrative responsibility* (Cambridge, MA, 1953), pp. 66–7.

⁹⁸ Chou Mi, *Wu-lin chiu-shih*, in *Tung ching meng hua lu: Wai ssu chung* (Taipei, 1980), pp. 366–7. For a late Northern Sung parallel to this, see Chu Yü, *P’ing-chou k’o t’an* (*Ts’ung shu chi ch’eng* ed.) 1, p. 16.

⁹⁹ The ratio was set at one in fourteen in 1127, one in seventeen in 1163, then at one in sixteen in 1175, where it stayed. SHY (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 4, pp. 17b–18a, 36a; 5, p. 3a.

¹⁰⁰ A prefectural selection ratio of one in 200, which was not particularly high, together with a departmental examination ratio of one in sixteen would give one a one-in-3,200 chance.

¹⁰¹ SHY (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 6, pp. 48a–49b.

¹⁰² See SHY (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 6, pp. 11b–12a; 16, p. 17b.

to gauge, but in the opinion of James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien) it was much worse than it had been during the Northern Sung.¹⁰³

For some, however, there were perfectly legal advantages to be had by taking special, less competitive examinations. Apart from the prefectural examinations, qualifying examinations (*chieh-shih*) for the selection of *chü-jen* were held at the University, in Lin-an for literati stranded in the capital (the supplementary examination or *fu-shih*), in circuit capitals for officials taking the examinations (the locked-hall examination or *suo-t'ing shih*), and for relatives of examiners and other active officials (the avoidance examination – *pieh-t'ou shih* or *tieh-shih*).¹⁰⁴ Mention should also be made of the clansmen who were examined separately from all others yet who also received *chin-shih* degrees.¹⁰⁵ With the exception of the extremely competitive supplementary examination – the government tried to discourage people from taking it – these special examinations had far more liberal quotas and thus were easier to pass.¹⁰⁶ The University's quota ratio was the most liberal – between one in four and one in five throughout the Southern Sung¹⁰⁷ – and it is true that it was open to all literati via the entrance examination. However, even there special entrance provisions existed for the relatives of certain officials, while others were permitted to take the University's preliminary examination without being University students.¹⁰⁸

There were also special departmental examinations. In addition to the Szechwan and imperial-clan departmental examinations already mentioned, relatives of the examining officials were segregated into an avoidance examination (*pieh-shih* or *pieh-yüan-shih*) which selected one in seven of the *chü-jen* (in contrast to one in sixteen or so at the departmental examination), while at the University there were frequent exemptions for students in the inner and upper halls from both preliminary and departmental examination levels.

The advantages given primarily to the relatives of higher officials at the preliminary and departmental examinations were substantial. I have argued elsewhere that a majority of the *chin-shih* from many of the southeast's most successful prefectures had *not* taken the prefectural examination, and further

¹⁰³ Liu Tzu-chien (James T. C. Liu), "Sung-tai k'ao-ch'ang pi-tuan: Chien lun shih-feng wen-t'i," in *Cb'ing chu Li Chi hsien-sheng ch'i shih sui lun-uen chi* (Taipei, 1965) 1, pp. 189–202; reprinted in Liu Tzu-chien, *Liang Sung shih yen-chiu hui-pien* (Taipei, 1987), pp. 229–47.

¹⁰⁴ See Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning*, pp. 98–113, for an analysis of the special examinations.

¹⁰⁵ See John W. Chaffee, *Branches of heaven: A history of the imperial clan of Sung China* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), pp. 104–7.

¹⁰⁶ The selection ratio for the avoidance examinations at the circuit capitals ranged from one in twenty in the early Southern Sung to one in fifty late in the dynasty. SHY (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 16, pp. 13b–15b, 18a; SS (1977) 156, p. 3639.

¹⁰⁷ SHY (1964) *Hsüan-chü* 4, p. 23a.

¹⁰⁸ See Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning*, pp. 104–5, for the specific provisions.

that roughly one-third of all Southern Sung *chin-shih* up to 1225 had not taken the regular departmental examination.¹⁰⁹ Even accepting the fact that a considerable portion of the last group were the Szechwan *chin-shih*, the role of privilege in the examinations clearly was considerable.

Before leaving this subject of privilege, we should note one other trend outside the examinations but pertinent to them: during the Sung, especially the Southern Sung, there was a steady decrease in the proportion of officialdom that had entered via the examinations. From an estimated 57 percent of the civil service in 1046, regular degree holders dropped to 45 percent in 1119, 31 percent in 1191, and then 27 percent in 1213.¹¹⁰ As for other entry methods, although the facilitated degrees accounted for a large share (26 percent in 1213), the *yin* privilege was the most important (39 percent in 1213), and there is reason to believe that its importance was increasing as the dynasty progressed.¹¹¹

CONCLUSION: THE SUNG EDUCATIONAL ORDER

The educational world of the late Southern Sung was a far cry from what it had been at the dynasty's outset. The very existence of the Imperial University in the capital and the examination halls and government schools that could be found in most prefectural and (for county schools) county capitals, not to mention the academies located in cities and countryside, made education highly visible in Sung society. The organization, calendar, rules, procedures and rituals of those institutions were common knowledge and shaped the lives and aspirations of innumerable literati. They were to prove extremely durable, moreover, for as we have noted much of the organization and structure of schools and examinations in later dynasties could be traced to the Sung.

The importance of Sung education went beyond institutions, however. Although the issue of popular education and literacy lie beyond the scope of this chapter and can only be touched upon here, it is safe to say that the effects of the spread of printing and schools reached well beyond the upper classes. The urban and economic transformations of the T'ang-Sung period created new demands for at least minimal or specialized literacy on the part of merchants, agents, brokers, manufacturers, skilled craftsmen, commercial farmers and shopkeepers, and while there is no way to measure the responses

¹⁰⁹ Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning*, pp. 108-13, 153-6.

¹¹⁰ See Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning*, pp. 26-7, for the method of reaching these figures, which was to compare the figures that we have for the size of the civil service with total degree numbers for the prior thirty-six years (the estimated average career length). Lee, *Government education and examinations*, p. 226, using slightly different assumptions, nevertheless finds the same trend.

¹¹¹ See Lo, *Civil service*, pp. 105-6.

the demands elicited, the fact that new primers appeared and the Chinese language underwent a great expansion in characters and vocabulary during the Sung suggests a popularization of writing.¹¹² Furthermore, the rewards offered by the examinations were evident to all, resulting not in true rags-to-riches inter-class mobility – of which there is little, if any, Sung evidence – but rather in defining mobility strategies for ambitious families. Wealthy nonelite families typically invested in education for their sons and tried to marry into the local elite, and often these went hand in hand, with marriage ties improving access to schools and the examinations, but also with academic success making men of humble background better marriage catches.

For the elite, the roles of learning and examinations were complex, particularly during the Southern Sung. The examinations were decreasing in importance relative to the *yin* privilege, cheating was rampant, and the use of privilege in getting through them was commonplace, yet they were more popular than ever before, at least in terms of candidate numbers. In fact, the competition caused by those large numbers undoubtedly contributed to the increasing use of privilege, especially the *yin* privilege. These somewhat paradoxical developments had other effects as well. First, the existence and use of recruitment privileges contributed to a social closure within elite society during the Southern Sung. In contrast to the Northern Sung, when many families, especially in the south, successfully pursued the mobility strategy described above and achieved social and political prominence for the first time, during the Southern Sung that was far rarer. It has been argued that this reflected a process of economic and social entrenchment in the fertile but hitherto underdeveloped agricultural regions, and in central and southern China, by families which were then to prove exceptionally long-lived and, in any given locality, interrelated with the other elite families through marriage, a process largely complete by the early Southern Sung.¹¹³ But we should also recognize their ability to make use of privilege in bureaucratic recruitment as a major factor in their longevity.

Second, the spread of learning as reflected in the mushrooming candidate numbers, as well as in the spread of schools, changed the nature of Chinese elite society and culture. The very difficulty of passing the examinations increased the prestige not only of the *chin-shih* degree, but also of lesser academic achievements in the Southern Sung. One finds for the first time

¹¹² See Thomas H. C. Lee (Li Hung-ch'i), "Sung schools and education before Chu Hsi," in *Neo-Confucian education: The formative stage*, ed. William Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee (Berkeley, 1989), pp. 129–33.

¹¹³ Hartwell, "Demographic, economic and social transformations of China," pp. 416–20; and Robert P. Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen: The elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 73.

individuals identified by their contemporaries or descendants as *chü-jen* or University students. In effect, these attainments took on social significance as the educational ladder became a status hierarchy.

Finally, the literati's widespread study of a common curriculum and participation in the examinations created a sense of shared civil culture among the local elites throughout the empire.¹¹⁴ Supported by new genres of printed works and new institutions like examination halls and the Southern Sung academies, the impact of the examinations was felt both at the level of philosophical discourse, where they proved a critical forum for the rise to orthodoxy of the Learning of the Way, and at the level of popular culture, with its rich lore of examination stories. Although this civil culture evolved in important ways in subsequent dynasties, its essential features were largely defined during the Sung.

¹¹⁴ This has been cogently argued by Peter K. Bol in "The Sung examination system and the *Shih*," review of *The thorny gates of learning in Sung China: A social history of examinations*, by John W. Chaffee, *Asia Major*, 3rd series 3 No. 2 (1990), pp. 149–71.

CHAPTER 6

ECONOMIC CHANGE IN CHINA, 960–1279

Joseph P. McDermott and Shiba Yoshinobu

INTRODUCTION

In the past century our perception of the Sung dynasty has changed significantly. Whereas this dynasty has always been admired for its cultural accomplishments and criticized for its political factionalism and military weakness, it has come in our time to be appreciated as a key period in the development of the Chinese economy. Its range of economic breakthroughs is seen not only as unprecedented in the preceding dynasties of imperial rule but also as the basis for the long-term secular economic growth of the succeeding dynasties. Indeed, several influential interpretations of the premodern Chinese economy have in the past century derived from a prior assessment of the changes in the Sung economy. Whereas some scholars have seen the Sung as a period of agricultural innovation, commercial and urban expansion, and social mobility, others have viewed it less favorably as a time when such signs of economic vitality lost out to landlord control of tenants, imperial domination of officials and merchants, and lineage and guild restrictions on their members' movements and activities.

Such differing interpretations of the Sung economy and society, nonetheless, share a common understanding of the ability of the preceding Sui (581–618) and early T'ang (618–907) governments to dominate the country's economy, both the largely self-sufficient rural sector and a commercial sector that linked the handicraft production of numerous provincial cities with one another and with the imperial capitals of Ch'ang-an and Loyang. These two dynasties, like their own immediate predecessors in north China, carried out agricultural policies that were intended to expand the land under cultivation and increase their control over its workforce. Claiming ownership of all land under their rule, they distributed equal amounts of land, officially eighty *mu* of arable land and twenty *mu* of mulberry fields, to the male head of each registered village household. Obligated in return to pay taxes in grain, silk, and labor services, these households annually provided the government with a

substantial share of the empire's agricultural and sericultural production.¹ Known throughout East Asia as the equitable-fields measure (*chiün-t'ien fa*), these legal regulations on land distribution were often adjusted to local conditions, such as a region's shortage of land or its soil's unsuitability to the planting of mulberry trees. Yet so intrinsic did these rules remain in the proper official understanding of how to run an empire that two centuries after their collapse in north China the newly established Sung dynasty (960–1279) in 961 ordered its officials to survey the empire's land to enforce this measure once again.² Elsewhere in East Asia as well, the equitable-fields measure proved highly attractive to governments wishing to reproduce the great success of the T'ang in ordering a vast empire, securing the livelihood of its peasantry, and creating great wealth for its officials and rulers.

In the cities, the Sui and the early T'ang governments established rules on market organization and procedures that were as elaborate as (and probably more widely implemented than) those for the equitable-fields measure in the countryside. Their "official market system" restricted all the commercial activities of each county (outside the few periodic markets) not just to its county seat of government but also to one or two areas within this seat, where officials could tightly control the movements and trading hours of buyers and sellers. In the capitals of these dynasties, a market director, a properly ranked official, was made responsible for overseeing virtually all aspects of these markets' transactions: the quality of money, the accuracy of weights and measures, the maintenance of fair business practices, the registration and control of brokers, and, most importantly, the setting of prices.

In the mid-eighth century, even in the areas where they had been strictly enforced, these practices of land distribution and market operations gave way to private economic arrangements that foretold fundamental changes in the way most of the Chinese economy would operate for the remaining twelve hundred years of its imperial history. This extensive collapse of the economic institutions of the early T'ang is often attributed to the disorders that followed the highly destructive rebellion of An Lu-shan (703–57) and his troops in north China in 755. But, actually, long before these soldiers mutinied against T'ang imperial rule, these institutions were being undone by their very success at achieving their initial goals of increased population, production, and trade. Simply put, these early seventh-century practices were not suited to an economy that by the mid-eighth century no longer needed the government to be the sole major agent for its regional and national integration. The mid-eighth-century Chinese economy had come to depend on far higher levels of

¹ Denis C. Twitchett, *Financial administration under the T'ang dynasty*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 1–9.

² Togto (T'o-t'o) et al., eds., *Sung shih* (Peking, 1980) (hereafter *SS* (1980)) 173, p. 4157.

private transaction and commercial exchange than had been considered likely or desirable a century and a half earlier. To achieve its potential growth, this economy now required less direct control from officials and their underlings and more official attention paid to its infrastructure and legal measures to reduce commercial risk. Henceforth, the government would, but for times of grain shortage and dynastic crises, tend to apply direct commercial controls largely to non-grain essentials, notably salt and minerals, consumed by the general populace. The large-scale production of these essentials was naturally restricted to a few areas, and their distribution was simplified by the government's delegation of their management to merchants and other private parties.

Consequently, from the late eighth century, T'ang financial administration no longer operated within its traditional framework. Even if the government did not remove the equitable-fields regulations from its legal code, in 780 it was obliged to adopt a new land tax predicated on the prevalence of private landownership. Just as importantly, this land tax tolerated inequality in landownership and, as a result, in tax levies. In some parts of north China large landowners included high officials and generals, but there and elsewhere in the empire land fell largely into the hands of countless peasants who had once tilled it for the dynasty. While scholars have disagreed about the predominance of landlordship and different forms of tenancy in the Sung economy, they have agreed on the late T'ang government's withdrawal from its long-standing control of the rural economy and the Sung's general acceptance of this reduced role in directing the empire's rural order and production. Significantly, whereas the Sung government would at times promote the distribution of new farm manuals, new farm tools, and new varieties of rice seed, it usually played a minimal role, if any at all, in the creation and production of these innovations.

The market organization also began to change in the late eighth century, though some of its rules and practices proved more tenacious than others. The T'ang government found it difficult to maintain with full force its earlier requirement that each county should have only one market and that each county's seat be the location of this sole market. From the ninth century onward, the practice of demarcating the perimeter of officially designated marketing areas and separate residential wards began to break down, especially in the capitals. Streets became devoted to specialized trades, and merchants by and large practiced their trade where they wished. As a result, officials collected commercial taxes (*shang-shui*) at tax stations set up mainly outside county seats. From the year 780, a tax was levied on goods at the last station they passed before being sold at a market; and, from 782, a totally new type of commercial tax had each tax station impose a transit levy on goods and cash passing it en route to a market. These commercial taxes were no longer paid

just by merchants but also by peasants and artisans when transporting their non-grain products to a market.

In parallel with these new tax arrangements, urban sites themselves underwent more changes. By no later than the eleventh century the physical barriers to the movement and exchange of goods within a Chinese city had completely disappeared, to be replaced by a **freer street pattern** in which trade could be conducted virtually anywhere in the city or its suburbs. Consequently, **the settlement of large cities like the old T'ang capital, Ch'ang-an, expanded beyond their city walls and gates into suburbs, whose thriving markets sometimes rivalled city centers with their commercial vitality.** Farther away from the walls of even ordinary county and prefectural seats of government, great numbers of small and intermediate-sized towns and periodic markets grew up closer to the villages and their surplus production. **These places of exchange constituted the lower levels of an economic hierarchy that was gradually growing distinct from the administrative hierarchy of both the T'ang empire and the provincial military governors (*chieh-tu-shih*) that supplanted its rule in the ninth and tenth centuries.** In the eleventh century, these markets, aided by the introduction of paper money and a vast increase in copper coinage, would enable an unprecedented circulation of goods throughout much of the empire.

Underlying all this expansion in the rural and urban economy was a notable improvement in **water transport** that greatly reduced the time and cost of trade. The relative cheapness, safety, and availability of boat traffic encouraged producers in different regions of the empire to change their mind about production in order to focus on what economists today call **"the benefits of comparative advantage."** By making and exchanging local specialties, they were able to establish a **regional division of labor that greatly expanded the volume and value of trade.** Sung merchants regularly sailed through the great inland river valleys of the empire as well as the full length of the China Sea from the far side of the Korean peninsula to the tip of the Southeast Asian peninsula. The areas most favored by these changing circumstances were those most readily reached by boat: the lower reaches of the Yellow River (*Huang-ho*); the Yangtze valley, with its numerous tributaries; the southeast coastline; and the Grand Canal littoral. Of these, the Grand Canal arguably played the most crucial role, at least up to the early twelfth century. It regularly enabled not only the northbound passage of millions of bushels of rice tax from the south but also the southbound transport of huge amounts of salt from the government's vast salt-monopoly fields along the Chiang-Huai coast. Such easy linkage of north and south China had broad repercussions on the development of their commercial links, as the canal came to function also as a conduit for private goods and trade.

In light of the emergence of these institutions, practices, tools, and relations that would profoundly shape the operation of the Chinese economy up to modern times, the period between the eighth and eleventh centuries has over the past century become known in historical circles as “the T’ang–Sung transformation.” Such an understanding has been very useful for delineating institutional and structural differences in the social and economic arrangements of these two dynasties and for demonstrating the oft-noted shift of the economy’s “center of gravity” from north to south China. Yet it has been less helpful for explaining the dynamic processes and linkages of these changes. Such an analysis, all too seldom attempted, requires initial clarification of both the short-term and the long-term performance of the Sung economy’s different sectors. The short term, even a year-by-year analysis, proves particularly appropriate for studying the key sector of agriculture, since its output varied considerably from harvest to harvest and since much information on annual and even seasonal harvests survives from the Sung.

A review, then, of such harvest and other economic data leads us to propose that the Sung economy underwent three long stretches, or centuries, of development: early Sung, a period of expansion from 960 to 1080 (making use of the 742 and c.1080 census records); middle Sung, a period of apparent continuity but actually one of turbulent recovery from 1081 to 1162; and thereafter late Sung, a period of structural readjustment of regional economies that encompassed first some growth and eventually a slowdown. It will see all of China’s total population during these periods roughly reach, in turn, 95 million in c.1080, then over 100 million in 1100, and finally slightly higher by the early thirteenth century.

Presented in such terms, this outline of economic change seems to resemble the dynastic cycle of “rise and fall” that has conventionally structured traditional Chinese political chronicles. But our emphasis will be on the interplay of regional differences rather than on the uniformity of national trends, on distinctions between the north and south as well as between the southeast and southwest, and on the economic problems and innovations evident in each of these centuries’ different regional economies. Thus, in answering for each century of the Sung the question how its population growth was fed, each of the three following sections will have its discussion generally proceed from patterns of demographic change to annual harvest returns and then long-term improvements or setbacks in the conditions for agricultural output, handicraft production, and commercial distribution. The theme of continuing population pressure on limited land resources will provide a basic framework for much of this chapter’s analysis, but so will the novel and nonagricultural ways that both northern and southern Chinese found to overcome such obstacles to achieving economic growth.

Furthermore, despite their sharing such common themes, the accounts for each century of Sung rule will have a different focus and deal with a different kind of crisis and economic response. The discussion of the first century will concentrate on agricultural problems, industrial advances, and the structure of commercial distribution; north China and its recurrent problems with drought and flood will be central to our concerns, and we shall see how the north's ongoing agricultural problems were, for a time, resolved by its successes in nonagricultural production. The account of the second century will deal with similar issues but will focus on a different kind of crisis, the loss of north China to foreigners in 1126, and its impact on the northern and the southern economies; this dynastic crisis seriously weakened the north's productive resources but did not prevent either improvements in the south's food supply and land usage, or significant innovations in its transport, financial, and commercial arrangements. The third discussion will consider the different structural or production responses made by different areas of south China to a widespread demographic crisis that struck the southern economy, especially its rice production in the last third of the twelfth century; these changes would allow for some further economic growth, until external military pressures led to a noticeable slowdown in the south's economic growth from c. 1230.

Throughout the discussion of each century's economy the analysis will stress the actual performance of different regional economies and their varying responses to problems of production and distribution. It will thus deal with dearth as well as growth, not simply because both are intrinsic to any premodern economy but also because our interest is primarily in the dynamic workings of this economy. In place of broad characterizations about its nature or narrow descriptions of its different sectors, we aim to present a more comprehensive analysis of how and why different sectors of the economies of different regions both interrelated and changed over the three centuries of Sung rule. This stress on differences and interconnections will, we hope, provide a clearer understanding of the centrality of these changes in the complex evolution of the Chinese economy up to our time.

LATE T'ANG TO EARLY SUNG (742–1080)

Population growth and distribution

The eleventh century, as is well known to students of the Sung economy, marks a significant turning point in the demographic history of China. If we compare the household register figures for two years, 742 and c. 1080, when the Chinese government had a strong interest in compiling relatively accurate household registers, the c. 1080 figure of 15,945,000 households is readily seen

to be nearly double the figure of 742 and 40 percent more than the previous peak Chinese household figure of the year AD 2.³ Thirty years later, the census figure in 1110 would rise further to 20,882,258 households. On the basis of the traditional average of 5.5 persons per household, these two Sung figures of c.1080 and 1110 would then come to, respectively, as much as nearly 83 million and 110 million individuals. Both figures then surpass any corresponding figure for China's total population for the next four to five centuries, and a similarly sized portion of Europe for at least six more centuries. In short, during the Sung dynasty China and, more broadly, mainland East Asia ranked as the most populous and most densely populated area in the world. An understanding of how the Sung population was supported would then explain much about the economic activities of roughly a quarter of mankind in these centuries.⁴

The c.1080 figure also indicates a major change in the distribution of China's population. North China – the broad area north of Szechwan, the Ch'in-ling Mountains, and the Huai river (*Huai-ho*) – had held roughly 80 percent of China's registered households in AD 2 and 55 percent in 742.⁵ By c.1080 its two macroregions of the northwest and the north had seen an overall increase in the number of their households and the north remained the most populous macroregion in the empire. But both marked up the smallest percentage increases of all of the Sung empire's macroregions since 742, and so saw their combined share of China's total population fall to just 35 percent in c.1080.

In contrast, during these three centuries the three macroregions of the middle Yangtze valley (Ching-hu), the lower Yangtze valley (Chiang-che), and the southeast almost doubled their share of China's population (from 27 to 50 percent) and thus held half of China's 95 million people in c.1080. Of these three macroregions, the southeast had seen the most rapid growth, so that its share of the country's registered households tripled between 742 and c.1080. Yet, strictly in terms of numbers, the greatest increase had happened in the middle

³ Liang Fang-chung, *Chung-kuo li-tai hu-k'ou, t'ien-ti, t'ien-fu t'ung-chi* (Shanghai, 1980), pp. 4–13, 122–64; and Robert F. Dernberger and Robert M. Hartwell, *The coterminous characteristics of political units and economic regions in China* (Ann Arbor, 1983), especially pp. iii–viii, and Table 9, pp. 175–9. An account of the principles and sources used to determine these figures is found in Robert M. Hartwell, "Demographic, political, and social transformation of China, 750–1550," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42 No. 2 (December 1982), pp. 426–38.

⁴ As conveniently charted in James Z. Lee and Wang Feng, *One quarter of humanity: Malthusian mythology and Chinese realities* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), p. 6.

⁵ Hans Bielenstein, "Chinese historical demography, A.D. 2–1982," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities (Ostasiatiska Museet)* 59 (1987), p. 141; and Michel Cartier and Pierre-Étienne Will, "Démographie et institutions en Chine: Contribution à l'analyse des recensements de l'époque impériale (2 ap. J.C.–1750)," *Annales de démographie historique* (1971), pp. 8 ff.

Table 7. *Census reports, AD 2–1190*

Date	Households	Persons
AD 2	12,233,062	59,594,978
157	10,677,960	56,486,856
609	8,907,546	46,019,956
742	8,907,546	48,019,800
755	8,914,709	52,919,309
760	1,933,174	16,990,386
820	2,375,400	15,760,000
839	4,996,752	
845	4,995,151	
959	2,309,812	
996	4,576,257	
1006	7,417,570	
1021	8,677,677	
1053	10,792,705	
1066	12,917,221	
c.1080	16,569,874	
1083	17,211,713	
1100	19,960,812	
1110	20,882,258	
1187	19,166,001	
1190	19,294,800	

Table 8. *North and south China household distribution*

	North China	South China	Total	North–south ratio
c.756	4,616,000	3,703,000	8,319,000	55% vs. 45%
c.1080	5,676,006	10,893,868	16,569,874	34% vs. 66%
1223		12,670,201		

Yangtze valley, which in c.1080 held a population almost as large as that of the north China macroregion.

The other large southern macroregion, the upper Yangtze river valley, saw its household number rise nearly by half, with the most rapid increases not in the long-settled and still most populous area around Ch'eng-tu, but rather in previously sparsely settled prefectures in the upper Yangtze river valley and around the city of modern Chungking. Thanks to quicker rises elsewhere in the south, this macroregion's overall share of the empire's population fell from 14 to 11 percent, a sign arguably of the relative maturity of its agricultural economy within an enclosed, greatly isolated, and often autonomous terrain.

Table 9. *Regional variations in household population, c.756 and c.1080*

	c.756	c.1080	Sung-to-T'ang ratio
Kuan-chung	742,000	895,000	1.2
Ho-nan	1,716,000	2,573,000	1.5
Ho-tung	616,000	648,000	1.1
Ho-pei	1,409,000	1,117,000	0.8
Lung-shih	48,000	157,000	3.2
Shan-nan	576,000	1,298,000	2.2
Huai-nan	412,000	1,298,000	2.6
Chiang-nan	1,048,000	2,209,000	2.1
Fu-chien	90,000	1,044,000	11.5
Chiang-hsi/Hu-nan	523,000	2,881,000	5.5
Chien-nan	873,000	1,257,000	1.4
Ling-nan	266,000	764,000	2.8

Furthermore, these statistics, when viewed in terms of changing population densities, indicate that by c.1080 the area with the greater density of population was now south China.⁶ No longer could the two macroregions of north and northwest China claim, as they had in 742, a population density twice that of the most crowded areas of south China. Their population decline or stagnation reduced their population density rank to only second and fifth among the macroregions in the Sung empire. Meanwhile, the population densities of the lower and middle Yangtze valley and southeast macroregions had all risen remarkably, attaining a level 25 percent greater than that of north China as a whole.

A prefectural breakdown of the macroregional figures for these two years, 742 and c.1080, confirms these changes. Some northern areas even registered a decline in population; Ho-pei circuit (*Ho-pei lu*), admittedly smaller than in the T'ang, lost 20 percent of its households. Indeed, all but one of the six regions in Sung China which suffered a population loss (from 10 percent to 30 percent) between 742 and c.1080 were located in north China, particularly the northeast: the Yellow River delta, the western Ho-pei plain, the Hua-Pei plain, the Ho-nan hills, and the Fen river valley. Paradoxically, the seriousness of north China's overall decline is underlined when we discern those parts of north China which registered notable population growth: the Huai river valley, the Shantung highlands, the Anhwei periphery, the Chi river valley,

⁶ Katō Shigeshi, "Sōdai no shūkyakko tōkei," in his *Shina keizai shi koshō* (Tōkyō, 1953), Volume 2, pp. 338-71; Aoyama Sadao, "Zui Tō Sō sandai ni okeru kosū no chiiki teki kōsatsu," *Rekishi-gaku kenkyū* 6 No. 4 (1936), pp. 411-46, and No. 5, pp. 529-54; and Hartwell, "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformation of China, 750-1550," pp. 365-442.

Table 10. *Changes in household population by circuit during the Sung*

Part of China (by circuit)	c.1080	1102	1223	1223 population density per km ²	Change from 1080 to 1223
North China					
K'ai-feng	235,599	261,117			
Ching-tung-tung	696,456	817,355			
Ching-tung-hsi	663,210	526,107	6,252	(0.11)	
Ching-hsi-nan	314,580	472,358			
Ching-hsi-pei	602,060	545,098			
Ho-pei-tung	667,897	668,757			
Ho-pei-hsi	564,762	526,704			
Yung-hsing-chün	846,045	1,101,498			
Ch'in-feng	509,199	449,884			
Ho-tung	576,198	613,532			
Huai-nan-tung	612,565	664,257	127,369	(3.26)	-79%
Huai-nan-hsi	744,499	709,919	218,250	(2.45)	-71%
South China					
Liang-che	1,778,953	1,975,041	2,220,321	(19.26)	25%
Chiang-nan-tung	1,127,311	1,012,168	1,046,272	(15.14)	-7%
Chiang-nan-hsi	1,287,136	1,664,745	2,267,983	(16.39)	76%
Ching-hu-pei	657,533	580,636	369,820	(2.31)	-46%
Ching-hu-nan	871,214	952,397	1,251,202	(10.23)	44%
Fu-chien	1,043,839	1,061,759	1,599,214	(13.52)	53%
Kuang-nan-tung	579,253	574,286	445,906	(2.94)	-23%
Kuang-nan-hsi	258,382	236,533	528,220	(1.74)	104%
Szechwan					
Ch'eng-tu-fu	864,403	882,519	1,139,790	(22.12)	32%
T'ung-ch'uan-fu	478,171	561,898	841,129	(11.97)	76%
Li-chou	336,248	295,829	401,174	(3.02)	19%
K'uei-chou	254,361	246,521	207,299	(1.35)	-18.5%
Total	16,569,874	17,400,918	12,670,201		

the Shantung coastal plain, and the Pohai coast (*Po-hai-wan*). The first four all were located along the Grand Canal, and as such greatly benefited from the government's extraction of southern grain surpluses for shipment to its capital in K'ai-feng and northern border outposts. The remaining two growth areas were the Shantung coastal plain and the Pohai coast. As such, they enjoyed a successful linkup with Sung China's overseas trade in northeast Asia that enabled them to escape some of the grain production problems of their surrounding countryside.

The concurrent rise of south China was not fortuitous. It had enjoyed a long period of peace, retained much fertile land for new tillage, offered many

Table 11A. *Regional population changes from 742 to 1213 (thousand households)*

	742	c.1080	Change from 742 to 1080	1213
North China core				
Huai river valley	14	85	(507%)	27
Anhui core/central Grand Canal littoral	138	327	(137%)	132
Shantung core/central Grand Canal littoral	182	244	(34%)	265
Shantung coastal plain	55	273	(396%)	192
Chi river valley	215	467	(117%)	435
Yellow River plain	627	679	(8%)	746
Yellow River delta	468	345	(-26%)	505
Shantung hills	79	96	(21%)	82
Western Ho-pei plain	442	379	(-14%)	579
Hua-pei plain	335	258	(-23%)	262
North China periphery				
Anhui periphery/central Grand Canal littoral	88	230	(161%)	—
N. Kiangsu coastal plain	55	133	(142%)	45
San-men rapids littoral	28	44	(57%)	41
Ho-nan hills	430	301	(-30%)	—
Southeastern Shansi highlands	152	190	(25%)	281
Shantung highlands	56	161	(187%)	186
Ho-pei periphery	116	137	(18%)	288
Po-hai coast	12	46	(283%)	119
Northwest China core				
Wei river valley	464	486	(5%)	263
Fen river valley	339	305	(-10%)	532
Northwest China periphery				
Turkestan-Kansu corridor	166	244	(46%)	348
Shensi-Kansu-Inner Mongolian frontier	31	36	(16%)	65
Loess plateau	110	123	(12%)	176
Lo river valley	199	350	(76%)	354
Lower Yangtze core				
Anhui core/south of Yangtze	20	51	(155%)	—
Southern Hangchow Bay littoral	219	471	(115%)	635
Yangtze delta (Shanghai and its hinterland)	110	292	(165%)	—
Southern Grand Canal littoral	282	565	(100%)	—
Lower Yangtze periphery				
Northern Chekiang highlands	341	447	(31%)	—
Anhui periphery/south of Yangtze	181	451	(149%)	—
Huai-yang hilly region	128	348	(172%)	—

(cont.)

Table 11A. (*cont.*)

	742	c. 1080	Change from 742 to 1080	1213
Middle Yangtze core				
Hu-nan core	147	945	(543%)	—
Chiang-Han plain	122	566	(364%)	—
P'o-yang Lake plain	53	327	(517%)	—
Middle Yangtze periphery				
Yangtze Gorges area	13	11	(-15%)	—
Upper Han river valley	83	234	(182%)	—
Hupei hills	124	339	(173%)	—
Po-t'ang plain	86	204	(137%)	36
Hu-nan periphery	67	134	(100%)	—
Kwangsi border highlands	6	34	(467%)	—
Kiangsi periphery	225	1,568	(597%)	—
Upper Yangtze core				
Ch'eng-tu plain	730	909	(24%)	—
Upper Yangtze river valley	313	579	(85%)	—
Chungking area	12	42	(250%)	—
Upper Yangtze periphery				
Tibet-Kansu corridor	16	106	(562%)	—
Upper Chia-ling river valley	10	58	(480%)	—
Sikang borderlands	134	126	(-6%)	—
Upper Yangtze river highlands	47	50	(6%)	—
Southeast coast core				
Northern Kuang-tung coastal lowlands	8	75	(837%)	—
Fu-chien coastal lowlands	77	569	(639%)	—
Southern Chekiang coastal lowlands	127	268	(110%)	—
Southeast coast periphery				
Northeast Kwangtung river valleys	5	60	(1200%)	—
Fu-chien inland river valleys	29	475	(639%)	—
Southern Chekiang hill country	43	89	(107%)	—
Lingnan core				
Hsi River valley	48	65	(35%)	—
Coastal core	140	247	(76%)	—
Lingnan periphery				
Southwest plain	7	30	(386%)	—
Northern highlands	45	127	(182%)	—
Coastal periphery	21	35	(67%)	—
Nan-ling highlands	79	187	(137%)	—

Table 11B. *Summary of regional population changes*

	742	1080	% change	% of empire in 742	% of empire in 1080
North China	3.492	4.395	(26%)	39%	26%
Northwest China	1.309	1.544	(18%)	15%	10%
Lower Yangtze	1.281	2.625	(105%)	14%	15%
Middle Yangtze	.926	4.326	(371%)	10%	25%
Upper Yangtze	1.262	1.870	(48%)	14%	11%
Southeast	.289	1.536	(431%)	3%	9%
Lingnan	.400	.691	(73%)	4%	4%
TOTAL	8.959	17.023	(90%)	100%	100%

commercial opportunities, and regularly produced a great surplus of grain. Not surprisingly, it accounted for 90 percent of China's registered population increase between 742 and c. 1080. Everywhere there, but for the ungovernable and untillable Yangtze river gorges area in K'uei-chou circuit (*K'uei-chou lu*), reported population growth. More than fifty prefectures were set up, mainly in the middle Yangtze valley and southeast, to handle the large influx of refugees from the late T'ang and Five Dynasties (907-60) disorders in north China. The largest increase in households in any region was registered in the middle Yangtze valley, particularly in the P'o-yang lake basin where two prefectures (*chou, fu*) and four commanderies (*chiin*) were newly set up and where older prefectures like Yüan-chou reported as much as a sevenfold increase in population. Settlement in this macroregion seems to have often been achieved by large family groupings, who as migrants from the Yangtze delta drained the lowland's marshes into rice paddies, planted its slopes with tea, farmed its forests for timber, and mined its mountains for minerals. The cities, conveniently linked by river and lake to markets hundreds of miles downriver, also served as regional centers for boat traffic along the Yangtze and the more slowly developing trade within their own mountainous hinterland.

The rate of population growth, however, was highest in the Southeast macroregion, at 431 percent overall and at 1,150 percent for Fu-chien. This registered growth is due partly to greater efficiency in local government administration and partly to a great inflow of northerners and others who expanded the coastal trade and opened up the mountains for much production of fruits, tea, timber, and minerals. In contrast to the middle Yangtze, the new settlements appeared mainly in the highland peripheries, not the core lowland areas. The abundance of mountain resources, the number of river valleys, and their linkage to maritime trading routes help to explain this different settlement pattern and a growing division of labor between

Fu-chien's mountains and its lowlands. In both terrains, agriculture remained the mainstay for most people's livelihood, but a surprising number turned to other occupations as well.

Finally, the macroregion with the highest population density was the lower Yangtze valley (the circuit with the highest population density, however, was Ch'eng-tu-fu in Szechwan). Its delta area with well-cultivated fields and its large cities undergirded by the emergence of market towns set the standard for advanced production and consumption levels that other regions would invariably be compared to, unfavorably. The delta's population growth had so far occurred mainly at the base of the surrounding hills and mountains to its west and south and not in its central and eastern areas, with their many marshes. Consequently, in c.1080 Hang-chou still boasted Liang-che's largest prefectoral population, 15 to 30 percent larger than those of the low-lying prefectures around Lake T'ai that would gain fame in the twelfth century for their exceptional levels of rice production.⁷

This survey of the demographic changes between 742 and c.1080, in sum, highlights the great regional differences in overall population figures, growth rates, and population density. In all these aspects the south had surged far ahead of the north, particularly the northeast. The upper Yangtze valley's population growth aided this southern ascendancy, but a far more vital contribution came from the opposite end of the empire, from the southeast. Yet, in the south, the area that achieved most of this recorded growth in household numbers, the three major macroregions – the middle Yangtze valley, the southeast, and the lower Yangtze valley – had recorded different levels, rates, and patterns of population growth. The rich variety of this demographic experience suggests a great diversity in regional economic conditions, and it is this variety that we wish to explore.

Population checks: epidemics and harvest crises

Many of these observations on Sung China's demographic growth echo the findings of earlier scholars. For the rest of this section, we wish to explore an issue less often addressed. What prevented this population growth from being even greater; in other words, what were the checks on population growth in Sung times? In theory, these checks are numerous, but historical demographers in recent years have come to a rough consensus that contagious diseases were the principal checks on population growth in premodern agricultural societies.⁸ Unfortunately, we have far too few sources to support such a

⁷ Liang, *Chung-kuo li-tai hu-k'ou, t'ien-ti, t'ien-fu t'ung-chi*, pp. 144–5.

⁸ David R. Weir, "Markets and mortality in France, 1600–1789," in *Famine, disease, and the social order in early modern society*, ed. John Walter and Roger Schofield (Cambridge and New York, 1989), pp. 201–34, especially p. 202.

conclusion about late T'ang and Northern Sung epidemics. The official records between 960 and 1080 report for north China just five epidemic attacks for the capital area, two for Ho-pei, and two for Yung-hsing-chün (in south China, seven of the ten recorded epidemics during these years were located in the Yangtze delta). Furthermore, their identity and fatality rates are unknowable.

By contrast, Sung grain harvest reports are relatively rich, particularly for those parts of the empire vital for the dynasty's survival.⁹ Admittedly, these reports – generally for rice in the south and for millet, wheat, and, to a lesser degree, kaoliang in the north – have certain inadequacies. They often exaggerate the extent of a shortage, since a harvest reported as a famine (most commonly, *chi*) was usually just a shortage (due perhaps to a failure in distribution as much as in production) and since the afflicted area can often be identified only by circuit and not by specific prefectures. Yet this weakness of our sources need not become a weakness in our analysis, so long as we focus our attention principally on those years of acute shortage when serious famines set back a region's population growth. This approach can thus help us to uncover basic problems in production, distribution, and social organization that obstructed further population increases in the different demographic regimes of north and south China during these centuries. In the following pages we will describe the varying harvest conditions in separate parts of north and south China during the Sung, with the aim principally of specifying the major harvest failures that would have posed serious checks on population growth. Our view of the Sung economy then should become both more concrete and dynamic, as we see how the economies of different regions had different histories that interacted with one another in different ways.

North China

In north China, harvest troubles were reported infrequently in the first two-thirds of the tenth century: a drought and/or famine struck at least one prefecture of north China every third year.¹⁰ Particularly disappointing harvests were

⁹ Information on harvest returns here and elsewhere come largely from *SS* (1980) 62, pp. 1341-74; Chung-kuo she-hui k'o-hsüeh-yüan li-shih yen-chiu-suo tzu-liao pien-hui, ed., *Chung-kuo li-tai tzu-jan tsai-bai chi li-tai sheng-shih nung-yeh cheng-tse tzu-liao* (Peking, 1988); Hsü Sung, comp., *Sung hui-yao chi-pen* (Taipei, 1965) (hereafter *SHY* (1965)) *shih-huo*, esp. 37, 39-42, 57-9; Li T'ao, *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien* (Peking, 1979-95) (hereafter *HCP* (1979)); Pi Yüan, *Hsü Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* (Peking, 1957); Ch'eng Min-sheng, *Sung-tai ti-yü ching-chi* (K'ai-feng, 1992), pp. 109-11; Satō Taketoshi, *Chūgoku saigai shi nenpyō* (Tōkyō, 1994); Wang Chung-lao, *Chin-ni yü-hsieh tsung-k'ao* (Peking, 1998); Tseng Tsao-chuang and Liu Lin, comp., *Ch'üan Sung-wen* (Chengtu, 1988-94); and Ch'üan Han-sheng, "Pei-Sung wu-chia te pien-tung," in his *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih lun-tzung* (Hong Kong, 1972), Volume 1, pp. 29-86.

¹⁰ As seen in Chung-kuo she-hui k'o-hsüeh-yüan li-shih yen-chiu-suo tzu-liao pien-hui, ed., *Chung-kuo li-tai tzu-jan tsai-bai chi li-tai sheng-shih nung-yeh cheng-tse tzu-liao*, pp. 78-84.

reported for the years 925, 934, 941, 943-4, and 948, after great droughts had stricken the breadth of north China.¹¹ Long stretches of land lay deserted from Ch'in-feng (modern Kansu) to Ho-pei, with tens of thousands fleeing at least temporarily. It is only with the establishment of Sung rule and especially the reign of Chen-tsung (r. 997-1022) that the record becomes more informative, indicating a greater frequency of recorded harvest shortages and famines in the northern border circuits of Ho-pei, Yung-hsing-chün (modern Shensi), and Ho-tung. Khitan incursions, Yellow River floodings, and repeated droughts explain these setbacks. In Ho-pei bad harvests are reported principally for the second, fourth, fifth, and eighth decades of the eleventh century; in Yung-hsing-chün they happened frequently between 1006 and 1017, as well as in 1043-4, 1048, 1052, and 1055; floods in southern Ho-pei, however, almost annually inflicted some damage on the harvest. Ho-tung was judged the poorest of the northern circuits, an area where it generally was "hard to get a bumper harvest," even though reports of bad harvests there are surprisingly few. Over these same decades bumper harvests were reported seldom from Yung-hsing-chün (from 1006 to 1009 and in 1016 and 1069) and from Ho-tung (from c.1006 to 1012 and in 1044 and 1069), and intermittently from Ho-pei. In Ho-pei's two circuits bumper harvests were reported for at least sixteen years between 1003 and 1069: during much of the first decade and a half after 1002, 1020-5, 1028, 1035, 1040, 1042, 1050, 1054, 1057, 1061, and 1069. The hard years, according to a recent study, were more often in the second quarter of the eleventh century.

Further information about harvest failures, particularly in the middle decades of the eleventh century, can be gleaned from scattered records of internal migration in years for which we usually have no harvest reports. In Ho-pei, for instance, between 1004 and 1095, large numbers of emigrants are reported for eighteen separate years, clustered around 1017-20 in southern Ho-pei, 1033-6 (when "unending disasters in Ho-pei are driving people into flight and not to return"), and 1056 and 1058; in other words, its relatively good harvest record was undermined by natural disasters, border concerns, and other problems that often drove portions of its population into flight. Between 983 and 1075 part of Yung-hsing-chün's population was forced to emigrate on at least fourteen occasions; the problem was very acute in 1043 when 2,542,537 migrants in thirteen of its prefectures received government food relief. Ho-tung's population, after its initial displacement by the Sung government, would seem to have been less uprooted than Yung-hsing-chün's; mass emigration is reported there for only eight years. Nonetheless, in addition to the years when the rural economy of virtually all of north China was in crisis

¹¹ *Chung-kuo li-tai tzu-jan chai-bai chi li-tai sheng-shih nung-yeh cheng-tse tzu-liao*, pp. 79-82.

during the 1030s and 1070s, its roads were filled by wives and children fleeing drought-induced harvest failure in 1066 and its western prefectures were disrupted by many emigrants in 1083. Tellingly, the prefectures of south China, where the more fortunate of these migrants ended up, rarely reported large-scale emigrations by their residents.

The scale of this population displacement is suggested by reports from years of extreme harvest failure, when death by famine undeniably occurred. These crisis years, identified in 1085 by the great historian and high official Ssu-ma Kuang (1019-86) as "years of great calamity" for the Sung, came with the locust attacks of the 1030s, the droughts of the 1040s, and the flood of 1056; to these can be added the great troubles of the 1070s.¹² In 1056 a Yellow River flood, coming after another highly destructive Yellow River flood in 1048 and a severe drought in 1055, destroyed innumerable private dwellings and government buildings throughout north and west China, with the worst damage reported in Ho-pei and the capital. The precise scale of the resulting famine and death is unclear, but the noted scholar-official Ou-yang Hsiu (1007-72) described the 1056 flood as the worst in recent generations.¹³

The major obstacles to north China's population growth during the eleventh century, however, were the nearly decade-long troubles and famines of the 1030s and 1070s. Essentially drought-induced famines, these agricultural troubles inflicted prolonged hunger on hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of north China's residents. The ensuing discontent helped to give rise to a reformist government under Fan Chung-yen (989-1052) in the Ch'ing-li era (1041-8) and to bring to a close another reformist government under Wang An-shih (1021-86) and his followers in the 1070s. These agricultural failures thus framed an era when court circles agreed about the seriousness of north China's rural problems but strongly disagreed about the best policy solutions.

The first of these famines came in the wake of increasingly extensive droughts, floods, and locust attacks throughout the empire. In 1031 a great drought and famine hit Ching-tung and Huai-nan circuits.¹⁴ By the year's end a grain-short government rescinded its ban on the sale of humans for grain in Huai-nan (the aim was more to quell mutinies by hungry soldiers than to relieve starving subjects). In the following year, 1032, drought and famine struck the west and south as well; some areas like Yung-hsing-chün, Huai-nan, and Chiang-nan-tung also were hit in 1033 by a fierce epidemic that in the Yangtze Valley saw off as much as 20 to 30 percent of those stricken by the

¹² HCP (1979) 358, p. 8564; the details given for these disasters are found in the same source at the appropriate years.

¹³ HCP (1979) 182, pp. 4414-16; 183, pp. 4423-4, 4439; and 185, p. 4472; and Ou-yang Hsiu, *Ou-yang Hsiu ch'üan-chi* (Taipei, 1971) *tsou-i chi* 14, p. 863.

¹⁴ SS (1980) 67, p. 1462.

disease. But most troublesome this year in north China were locust attacks. Reports of their infestation came from across the full breadth of north China, from Ho-tung circuit to the sea, driving reportedly more than 600,000 people in Ho-pei onto the road for escape and relief. For hundreds of miles across the Shantung peninsula all the crops were devastated.¹⁵

Recovery eventually came, but not thanks to government policies that still focused primarily on the rescission of a ban on the sale of human beings and the exchange of examination degrees for sizable donations of grain relief. In the succeeding five years some order was restored, but few refugees headed home. Those who did soon confronted another destructive drought and famine. In 1039, 1.9 million peasants in the north China plain received famine relief from government reserves. The number dead from hunger is not specified (nor is the number who received loans from private granaries). But the recorded number of public-relief recipients, then, suggests that these drought-inflicted famines in north China (concurrent with a particularly lethal epidemic in south China) undoubtedly inflicted a sharp shock to north China's rural economy.

The middle years of the eleventh century saw a divergence between the northeast and the northwest regions. Whereas a dramatic shift of the Yellow River's downstream course into central Ho-pei in 1048 led to serious damage to its agricultural production in the second half of the eleventh century,¹⁶ reports of serious food shortage in Yung-hsing-chün and Ho-tung are fewer in these mid-century decades. Except for the 1048, 1056, 1061, and 1065 floods and their ensuing famines, these years provide a brief interlude of some abundance in north China overall before the agricultural crisis of the 1070s. After bumper crops throughout northeast and north central China in 1069, drought and famine struck Ho-pei and Yung-hsing-chün in 1070 and 1071, prompting Ssu-ma Kuang in late 1071 to write about extensive flight and a total harvest failure throughout all of Ho-pei but for its southern foothills. The good harvests in Ho-tung and Ho-pei in 1072 provided relief, but only temporarily, since in 1073 and 1074 a devastating drought and famine were reported for every circuit in north China. By late 1073 parts of Ho-pei and Yung-hsing-chün were reporting a drought; they were joined by Ho-tung and Huai-nan the following spring.¹⁷ In the fourth month of 1074 the metropolitan prefecture of K'ai-feng declared the loss of over half of its grain crop,¹⁸ and by the summer's end the serious drought had spread to the Hsi Hsia kingdom (1032–1227) north of the border and to Liang-che south of the

¹⁵ Shih Chieh, *Ts'u-lai Shih hsien-sheng wen-chi* (Peking, 1984) 1, pp. 2–3; 19, p. 226; and *SS* (1980) 10, p. 197.

¹⁶ Zhang Ling, "Environmental and economic change in Hebei in the eleventh century" (diss., University of Cambridge, 2008).

¹⁷ *HCP* (1979) 251, pp. 6116, 6123, and 6139. ¹⁸ *HCP* (1979) 252, pp. 6147–8.

Yangtze.¹⁹ In Yung-hsing-chün the drought was described as extreme.²⁰ Before winter temperatures and blizzards hit, 30,000 migrants were already buying grain at reduced prices from government granaries in the capital.²¹ Soon, their ranks were crowded by the well-to-do, who were all too aware that the flight of their fellow villagers exposed them to bands of roaming marauders from other villages.²² Consequently, they baldly ignored government bans on their migration.²³ By the ninth month over 46,000 persons were counted as having migrated to the capital from just nine of Ho-peï's twenty-five prefectures and eight commanderies (the other prefectures and commanderies' emigrants are not recorded).²⁴ In Yung-hsing-chün reportedly 80 to 90 percent of the populace left home to hunt down food elsewhere in the fall and winter of 1074.²⁵

These natural disasters and their inadequate human response culminated in the great famine of 1075, in all likelihood China's most widespread and destructive famine in the eleventh century. By the fall of that year all circuits in north China, from Ch'in-feng in the west to Ho-peï-tung in the east, reported a severe shortage of food. This north China crisis was echoed in Huai-nan-tung and Liang-che-hsi to the south and Ching-hu-nan circuit (*Ching-hu-nan lu*) to the southwest,²⁶ and thus spanned the east–west breadth of the Sung empire for virtually all the area north of the Yangtze, for much of the Yangtze valley, and for some areas farther south. Relief, even if available, was stymied by the impact of the drought on the boat traffic: by the early fall of 1075 stretches of the Grand Canal in Huai-nan, just a few miles north of the Yangtze river, had dried up, halting the passage of grain shipments and salt monopoly payments needed by the capital and its hundreds of thousands of residents.²⁷ Prolonged cold spells and snowfalls then came to three northern circuits. As 60–70 percent of the Ching-tung circuits' population was said to be already in flight from the devastating drought and plundering locusts,²⁸ K'ai-feng became a site of extensive relief operations for the homeless. But in Huai-nan many died of the bitter cold, sleet, and snow.²⁹ In Ho-tung some fled north over the border into enemy territory.³⁰ Even more fled to K'ai-feng,³¹ only to be greeted by a drought and locus attack there in the fall of 1075.³² Since by now more than 80 percent of the residents of the two capital circuits had reportedly turned to the road in search of food and since many were being turned away from the capital by an overwhelmed government, tens of thousands of these desperate

¹⁹ HCP (1979) 254, pp. 6210, 6127; and 257, p. 6276. ²⁰ HCP (1979) 254, p. 6220.

²¹ HCP (1979) 255, p. 6243. ²² HCP (1979) 255, p. 6243. ²³ HCP (1979) 262, p. 6413.

²⁴ HCP (1979) 256, p. 6251. ²⁵ HCP (1979) 256, p. 6255.

²⁶ HCP (1979) 265, pp. 6484, 6514, 6535; and 271, p. 6645. ²⁷ HCP (1979) 266, p. 6523.

²⁸ HCP (1979) 269, p. 6595. ²⁹ HCP (1979) 271, p. 6637. ³⁰ HCP (1979) 261, p. 6358.

³¹ HCP (1979) 264, p. 6475; and 265, p. 6516. ³² HCP (1979) 269, p. 6595.

northern Chinese migrants collapsed and died on their way south. For once the Chinese cliché – the road was piled high with bodies one atop the other – rang true.

The scope and scale of the devastation in the mid-1070s was unprecedented for China under Sung rule. The entire breadth of north China, not just a few circuits, was stricken by these famines and droughts. In some places the shortage of food, worsened by floods or epidemics, lasted for three consecutive years. Community after community was forced to scrounge far and wide for grain, at a time when north China's transport and communications had broken down. The exaggerated figures of mass migration mentioned above suggest the widespread imminence of death for a rural population fleeing one sort of doom for another.

If, then, the many reports of extensive death by starvation throughout the north China plain in these years are credible, the scale of the attendant loss is suggested by the difference between the household figures for the census that immediately followed this crisis, that of c.1080, with those of the major census for the next generation in 1102. In this latter census each northern circuit except Ching-tung registered more households than in c.1080, for an overall 28 percent increase, or roughly 7 million persons. Even half of this figure would represent a loss of more than a tenth of north China's registered population, thereby robbing it of much of its population growth over at least the previous generation or two, since at least the 1030s and perhaps from as far back as the mid-tenth century. This scale of death helps to explain the deep resentment of Wang An-shih's reforms and warm support for his opponents like Ssu-ma Kuang among all social strata in north and even south China.

South China

This north China chronology of harvest crises was to a large extent echoed in Huai-nan, where similar dryland agricultural patterns predominated in the north, giving way, in its southern expanses, to the rice paddies of south China. After a string of bumper harvests between 1007 and 1009 and 1013,³³ food shortages were reported for 1010–12, for 1032–6, for some years in the 1040s, for 1050–2, and for 1073–5, the very years that greatly disrupted north China's economy and drove many of its peasants into flight.³⁴ In 1080 some 470,000 individuals were said to have been dropped from the government's registers in Huai-nan due to previous flight, commendation, or

³³ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 39, p. 6a; Anonymous, *Sung ta chao-ling chi* (Peking, 1962) 186, p. 679.

³⁴ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 39, pp. 7b–8a; Ch'üan, "Pei-Sung wu-chia te pien-tung," Volume 1, pp. 39 and 43; Satō, *Chūgoku saigaishi nenpyō*, pp. 117 and 118; SS (1980) 67, p. 1462; and HCP (1979) 265, p. 6535, and 271, p. 6648.

death. Harvests also were slim for a series of years before 1013, from 1016–20, in the early 1040s, and for a series of years before 1052 (due to droughts); reports of bumper crops were noticeably fewer, just in 1008, 1028, and 1077.

Farther south, in the lower Yangtze delta, harvest returns were more often recorded and show a different pattern of results. In the Five Dynasties period this wealthy region had suffered few serious disruptions to its harvests; one account numbers them as only four floods and one drought; another account mentions just a flood in the early 930s. This tenth-century harvest bounty enabled the delta to ship its grain surpluses to neighboring regions suffering food shortages. The reputation it thus won for affluence persisted on through the eleventh century, often in striking contrast to its actual achievements. After bumper harvests in 996 and 1008–9, its harvests repeatedly proved to be disappointing. Recurrent droughts allowed only one big harvest on its relatively high fields between 1034 and 1063, while flooding of its low-lying fields proved so disruptive that these rice paddies enjoyed just one big harvest between 1040 and 1055.³⁵ In 1043, after several years of slim harvests (including the loss of three-quarters of the harvest in 1042), Fan Chung-yen observed that the Sung's poor administration of the delta's rural infrastructure had resulted in a considerable increase in the price of its rice.³⁶ The usual problem then and later for most of the delta's fields was flooding, for all of Su-chou (P'ing-chiang fu) throughout the 1053–63 period and again in 1071 (especially its Ch'ang-chou county), and repeatedly for the prefectures of Su-chou, Ch'ang-chou, and Hang-chou during the rest of the eleventh century.³⁷

In sharp contrast to north China, this disappointing record in south China led to few food shortages and even fewer famines in the delta during the first century of Sung rule (mainly, it seems, in 1042 and 1074). In fact, fewer of the delta's residents probably died from hunger alone than from contagious diseases, especially during the epidemics of 1057 and 1075. Thus its undistinguished harvest returns, bolstered when needed by in-shipments of private and public supplies of grain, seem not to have led to the very destructive famines that intermittently drove a significant portion of north China's population onto the road in flight from starvation, or into the grave.

Agricultural production

Speculation with numbers

How, then, was this huge and often hungry population – over 100 million in north and south China by the close of the eleventh century – fed? In theory,

³⁵ Fan Ch'eng-ta, *Wu-chün chih* (1192; Nanking, 1986) 19, p. 264. ³⁶ *HCP* (1979) 143, p. 3440.

³⁷ Fan, *Wu-chün chih*, 19, pp. 270, 286, 287; and *HCP* (1979) 248, p. 6055; and 461, p. 11028.

an answer to this question might begin with two reasonable hypotheses. First, the doubling of the population between the mid-eighth century and the late eleventh (as well as later on in the early thirteenth century) entailed a considerable increase in food, especially grain, production. Clearly, as seen above, the performance of the different regional economies varied considerably: the production level in the northern border regions and the interior of Ho-pei probably fell while that of the far wealthier sections of the southeast rose at least until the late twelfth century. As our account of manufactured and distributed commodities will show, there is good reason to think that the overall standard of living in the empire as a whole was at least maintained if not raised. Such a claim for so vast an area for so long a stretch of time can readily seem fatuous. But, if true, it allows us to see that overall grain production would have probably risen at least twofold until some late twelfth-century agricultural crises.

Second, this increase of food production was achieved through a similar degree of increase in the empire's amount of arable land (producing similar harvest levels), or a doubling of the productivity of the amount of land already under cultivation in 755, or, most likely, a mixture of these two factors. As the population increase under Sung rule was overwhelmingly concentrated in the rice-growing areas of south China (which contained far more newly opened land and provided more productive harvests than the dryland areas of the north), these grain production increases would have in all likelihood taken place principally in the rice paddies of south China. They also might allow for some areas, even in north China, to diversify their economic work largely into nonagricultural production.

To test and develop such hypotheses, it would be desirable to plot and compare statistics on land cultivation and grain production for each of the three centuries we have designated for the Sung. Unfortunately, nearly all surviving examples of these figures offer little help to such an enquiry. Sung registered land figures are far less reliable than Sung household figures. They reportedly omit as much as three-quarters of all tilled land, and, contrary to a wealth of nonquantitative evidence, show only a minor rise in cultivated land between 755 and c.1080.³⁸ Even the c.1080 figures of the Wang An-shih era, when central-government interest in rural production peaked, show a drop of 11 percent from the top Sung figures of 1021. At best, this cadastral survey's circuit-wide figures confirm other evidence indicating the regions with relatively high population density and land shortage (mainly the southeast and

³⁸ Liang, *Chung-kuo li-tai hu-k'ou, t'ien-ti, t'ien-fu t'ung-chi*, pp. 6–8, 291; Tu Wen-yü, "T'ang Sung ching-chi shih-li pi-chiao yen-chiu," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu* No. 4 (1988), pp. 37–52, esp. 38; and Victor Cunrui Hsiung, "The land-tenure system of Tang China: A study of the equal-field system and the Turfan documents," *T'oung-pao* 85 (1999), esp. p. 378, for a useful reminder of the fluctuating size of a *mu* and the dubiousness of the mid-eighth-century land survey figures.

central Szechwan) and the circuits with much expansion of their arable land in recent decades (mainly portions of the metropolitan circuit, along with the circuits of Ho-pei and Liang-che).

The figures on grain production, usually tabulated on a per-*mu* basis, would seem more reliable, if only because they attracted less contemporary criticism. Yet the scarcity of reliable private and government records of actual production, rent payments, income, and even collected tax figures considerably handicaps any meaningful statistical analysis of grain production. In contrast to the ideal situation of having a series of actual harvest figures, rents, and tax statistics for the same group of fields over several decades, we have a grab-bag set of numbers which all too many scholars, weary of the charms of class analysis, have manipulated to project general trends in actual agricultural production and productivity. As suggested by these scholars' sharp disagreements, these figures are seriously unsuited for such calculations. Most are optimum estimates of the per-*mu* production level for a county or prefecture (that do not reflect actual harvest results) or reconfigurations of rent quotas on specific plots (that mistakenly assume that rents invariably accounted for half of these plots' actual and estimated harvests).³⁹ Moreover, these same production estimates seldom consider the essential variables – soil quality, topography, multiple cropping, and attached benefits (e.g. use of tools, oxen, and irrigation facilities) – that would have raised or lowered a plot's actual production and rent.

Fortunately, there survive a small number of actual production and rental returns on specific fields. These figures are rarely free of interpretative difficulties, not least the actual size of their measuring units. But, when selected for the Liang-che-hsi prefecture of Su-chou – described along with one of its neighbors as the granary of the empire in the late twelfth century – these figures constitute a suggestive time series of production and rent statistics, even though they rarely describe the same fields. They remind us of the crucial distinction between this prefecture's marginal counties and its core counties favored with adequate irrigation and drainage facilities that not uncommonly assured their fertile paddy fields of production levels as high as three bushels per *mu* during the Southern Sung.

Possibly the most instructive example of such continuous Su-chou data comes from the Fan clan's landed trust.⁴⁰ Estimated at its founding in c.1050 to consist of over 1,000 *mu* in the core counties of Wu and Ch'ang-chou, it had then an annual fixed rental income of c.800 bushels (i.e. approximately

³⁹ E.g. Ch'i Hsia, *Sung-tai ching-chi shih* (Shanghai, 1987–8), Volume 1, pp. 134–8. Shiba Yoshinobu, *Sōdai Kōnan keizaishi no kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1988), pp. 137–41, has a comprehensive listing of the figures for the Yangtze delta fields.

⁴⁰ Fan Yung-ch'iu et al., *Fan-shih chia-sheng* (1745 ed.), 14.

0.8 bushel per *mu*). Later, at a Ming dynasty (1368–1644) date I take to be c.1432, the Wu county fields included in the estate's original landholdings were reported to provide, on average, an annual per-*mu* fixed rent of 1.3 Sung bushels of rice (a Ming bushel held c.60 percent more grain than a Sung bushel). What explains the 60 percent rent increase between 1050 and c.1432 – greater landlord extraction or greater rice production? – needs, like much else with this source, further study. Yet it is hard to refrain from positing some role for increased rice production in these *mu* (even if the rent accounted for as much as 70 percent, per-*mu* production would have reached at least two Sung bushels in these core-county fields).

That said, any talk of a “Sung agricultural revolution” is premature. Certainly the concept ill fits the Northern Sung (960–1127) harvest record for north China and the principal south China area thought most worthy of this designation, Liang-che-hsi. Yet Liang-che-hsi's far better harvest record between 1136 and 1193 and less regularly during some of the decades in the thirteenth century may well allow for considerable increases then in per-*mu* production, in its well-settled core area and in some of its newly developed eastern stretches. Further comment, including the eventual possibility of some quantification of these Fan lineage figures, awaits far more detailed research.

For the time being, a deeper understanding of changes in production levels during the Sung can be gained by examining other sources, such as quantitative and nonquantitative comparisons of regional economies, the institutional framework of land-tenure practices, and the efficacy of farming tools used in various parts of the country. As the information on all three of these key aspects of the Sung rural economy is often too thin for undertaking a century-by-century analysis over the course of the dynasty, the discussion of them in this section will include information from the entire length of the Sung, taking care nonetheless to point out some important changes in regional economies, land tenure, and farming tools during these three centuries.

Regional differences in grain production and economic conditions

Freed of such unproductive play with numbers, we can turn to general estimates on grain production. These figures, when supplemented with some production figures for specific plots, can be read to suggest very rough quantitative variations in regional grain production levels. Thus, for north China during the Northern Sung, the annual per-*mu* estimates of grain production were highest for the Wei river valley and far western stretches of Yung-hsing-chün (two to three bushels), but far lower, from less than one bushel to 1.5 bushels, for parts of Ho-pei, Ho-tung, and Ching-hsi. In south China the estimates tended to be higher, with Liang-che-hsi's paddies judged

on several occasions the most productive at three bushels of rice per *mu*. In the Southern Sung (1127–1279), not far behind were high-quality fields in Huainan (two bushels), Liang-che-tung (two bushels, but slightly more in coastal Shao-hsing prefecture), Fu-chien (two bushels in Fu-chou), Chiang-nan-tung (1.5 to two bushels), and Ching-hu-pei (two to three bushels). Ching-hu-nan, Kuang-nan-hsi, Kuang-nan-tung, and K'uei-chou took up the rear.

What these ranks, even if quantified, cannot indicate is the key variations in these regions' rural economic development and production conditions – the availability of land, soil quality, grain seeds, land use, farm tools, irrigation works, cropping patterns, farming schedules, and degrees of population density – and changing perceptions of these differences. Such information, however, is found in a great number of Sung regional comparisons. This genre of regional commentary boasts a very long history in China; those in the middle and late T'ang were often linked to the northern capitals' need for regular shipments of southern rice. In the Sung such north–south comparisons become common from the mid-eleventh century, when the south was generally seen as the more productive, populous, and prosperous half of the country. At the base of many of these Northern Sung judgments lay the issue of land shortage/surplus, with a shortage of arable land reported from the mid-eleventh century in western Szechwan and the lower Yangtze valley, and later from Liang-che-tung and Fu-chien. Labor would instead be in short supply in much of north China (and some far southern circuits like Kuang-nan-tung). In the twelfth century such regional contrasts continued to be written, with much made of the southeasterners' increasing resort to cremation rather than interment for their burials.⁴¹

By the last half of the twelfth century, however, the focus of the regional contrasts shifted. With the Sung domain now reduced to just the southern portion of the country, officials wrote repeatedly of a sharp economic divide between the southeast and the southwest, between the lower Yangtze valley and the middle Yangtze valley. Far more than ever before, their judgments were explicitly based on the details of economic life – productivity, fertilizer use, irrigation, cropping schedules, farm tools, and working practices – probably reflecting these officials' wider travels and perhaps a longer residence in their native area. In these comparative assessments the “gold standard” of agricultural practice and productivity was situated in the low-lying fields of Liang-che, particularly Liang-che-hsi. By the end of the twelfth century, the rice harvests in its prefectures, especially Su-chou and Hu-chou (or Ch'ang-chou),

⁴¹ E.g. Patricia Buckley Ebrey, “Cremation in Sung China,” *American Historical Review* 95 No. 2 (April 1990), pp. 406–28; and “The response of the state to popular funeral practices,” in *Religions and society in T'ang and Sung China*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu, 1993), esp. p. 222.

were hyperbolically judged capable of feeding all in the empire. Its farming tools were judged superior to those used in fields farther south, its farming techniques more skilled than those in western Szechwan (*Shu*), its use of fertilizer and transplanting more sophisticated than in Chiang-nan-hsi, its harvests ten times greater per *mu* than those in the Huai river valley, its care of livestock more thorough and thoughtful, and its irrigation systems more complex and effective than those of the P'o-yang and Tung-t'ing lake basins. Thus, in Sung times, particularly the Southern Sung, Liang-che-hsi and northern Liang-che-tung were widely regarded, despite their disappointing harvest record in the eleventh century, as the most productive and wealthiest area of the empire.⁴² Below them ranked Ch'eng-tu-fu (Ch'eng-tu-fu lu), Fu-chien, Chiang-nan-tung, Chiang-nan-hsi, Ching-hu (Ching-hu-nan lu and Ching-hu-pei lu), Kuang-nan (Kuang-nan-hsi lu and Kuang-nan-tung lu), K'uei-chou, and the two other circuits of Szechwan, Li-chou and Tzu-chou, as well as all of north China.

Another set of revealing regional gradients, however, can be constructed by examining miscellaneous Sung comments on the basis of a household's wealth. Since at least early imperial times, the form of asset considered most important for determining whether a household was rich or poor had usually been the size of its landholdings, as in "so-and-so was a wealthy family with so many hundreds of *mu* of fields." But by the late twelfth century one can discern in the Yangtze valley and along the southeast coast significant regional variation in such matters. For instance, in K'uei-chou, Ching-hu-nan, and Ching-hu-pei circuits a household's wealth was frequently measured by the number of families attached to it, in Chiang-nan-hsi and Chiang-nan-tung by the amount of land it owned, in Liang-che-hsi also by its amount of rent bushels or their land's cash value, and in parts of coastal Che-tung (Liang-che-tung) and Fu-chien also by its cash wealth.⁴³ In other words, a clear gradient of regional commercialization and monetarization, proceeding from human labor to arable acreage to marketable produce and eventually to cash, supports the widely held belief among Sung authors that the closer a region was located to the South China Sea, the more commercialized and monetarized was its economy. Omitted from this perspective are the other three circuits of Szechwan, the Huai-nan area during the Southern Sung, and the interior of Liang-che-tung and Fu-chien. But this regional spread nonetheless is useful for highlighting great structural distinctions between these regions' economies, differences that encouraged merchants to engage not just in short-haul intra-regional trade

⁴² Wei Ching, *Hou-le chi* (Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen ed.) 13, p. 28a.

⁴³ Sudō Yoshiyuki, *Chūgoku tochi seidoshi kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1954), pp. 112–14, 132; and Yanagida Setsuko, *Sō Gen shakai keizaishi kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1995), p. 19.

but also in long-distance traffic between very diverse regional economies. The needs of one region could increasingly be met by the surpluses of another, as, in particular, the lowlands of the middle and lower Yangtze valley and the southeast coastal regions came to form, incompletely, an overlapping market for their labor (through migration), their land (through some common practices), their grain (through shipping in times of shortage), and their specialized produce in food and crafts.

What follows, then, is a survey of the different practices – changes in land-tenure arrangements, the use of farm tools and draft animals, the introduction of new seeds, the expansion of the arable land, and the adoption of multiple cropping – that help explain the contrasting assessments of these regions' agricultural economies and their relative significance in supporting their varying population increases. As might be expected, developments in the southeast will be the principal focus of this analysis. But north China, Ching-hu, and the far south will also merit some consideration, if only because they too were linked into exchanges and transactions that supported their distinctive demographic regimes.

Land-tenure arrangements

Of all the institutional changes that encouraged agricultural production increases from the late T'ang through the Sung, the earliest and most significant was probably the **introduction and adoption of private landownership arrangements**. As this basic change to Chinese economic life pre-dates all the other institutional and agricultural innovations that we shall consider in detail, its influence was relatively long-lasting. Its influence also was pervasive, since by its nature such an alteration of land-tenure practices changed the framework for virtually all transactions and decisions about the usage and ownership of land, the predominant means of production and often the predominant form of wealth.

As already noted, the Chinese government in the seventh and early eighth centuries had claimed ownership of all land in the empire. Its equitable-fields measure regulated the distribution of equal amounts of arable land to its subjects for the growing of grain and mulberry trees in return for their payment of taxes in grain and silk. These land-grant arrangements were in places adapted to local conditions (indeed, in south China it is not clear if the equitable-fields measure was ever implemented). Yet their full collapse came with the An Lu-shan rebellion of 755, when government land registers were destroyed, much land was seized by local elites, and T'ang dynastic power was greatly weakened even inside its borders.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Twitchett, *Financial administration*, pp. 1–6.

In 780 the new arrangements of private landownership eventually won T'ang government recognition, if not approval, with the establishment of a new land tax, the twice-a-year tax (*liang-shui fa*), that assumed **unequal ownership of land**.⁴⁵ This change, at least in hindsight, encouraged increases in land productivity in a variety of ways. It enabled owners to cultivate crops suited to local soil conditions and market demands rather than to meet uniform government tax requirements. It encouraged the opening up of new land by private parties who could gain the full benefit of their investments, since the late T'ang and Sung governments generally did not restrict the amount of land any private party could own.⁴⁶ It eventually improved security of ownership by emphasizing the use of written contracts for land transfers, which even involved **total alienation of landownership**.⁴⁷ Arguably, then, private parties would therefore have been more willing to invest their wealth in both the acquisition and the improvement of landed property.

This argument, despite its considerable persuasiveness, is weakened by the **limitations of the surviving evidence**. Virtually all signs of grain production and productivity increases during the Sung come from **south China**, that half of the empire which before the An Lu-shan rebellion might have already tolerated and recognized some form of private landownership. Also, **the security of tenure for these new institutional arrangements** was far from predictable.⁴⁸ Arbitrary government rulings, corrupt local government clerks, and local "households of influence" all too often distorted these institutional changes to reduce the potential benefit of private landownership to the productivity of Sung agriculture.⁴⁹

More convincing signs of the positive impact of private landownership arrangements are instead found in local land tenure customs. In theory and in fact, members of all social strata, from the imperial household to the bond-servant households, could own and alienate land.⁵⁰ Not surprisingly, as much as two-thirds of all registered households – in north China it was more than three-quarters – owned some land. The "large landlords" (i.e. households with

⁴⁵ Twitchett, *Financial administration*, pp. 39–43.

⁴⁶ Sudō Yoshiyuki, *Chūgoku tochi seidōshi kenkyū*; and his *Sūdai kanryōsei to daitochi shōyū* (Tōkyō, 1950), pp. 209–10.

⁴⁷ Valerie Hansen, *Negotiating daily life in traditional China: How ordinary people used contracts*, 600–1400 (New Haven, 1995), pp. 47 ff.

⁴⁸ Brian E. McKnight, "Introduction," in *The enlightened judgments: Ch'ing-ming chi: The Sung dynasty collection*, trans. Brian E. McKnight and James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien) (Albany, 1999), pp. 15–16.

⁴⁹ James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien), "The Sung views on the control of government clerks," *Journal of the Social and Economic History of the Orient* 10 Nos. 2–3 (December 1967), pp. 317–44; and Yanagida Setsuko, "Sūdai gyōseiko no kōsei," *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 27 No. 3 (December 1968), pp. 100–17.

⁵⁰ Joseph P. McDermott, "Charting blank spaces and disputed regions: The problem of Sung land tenure," *Journal of Asian Studies* 44 No. 1 (November 1984), pp. 13–41.

more than several hundred *mu*) accounted for only a tiny portion of the population, and their landholdings only a minor part of the arable land. Yet, at the same time, according to the research of Yanagida Setsuko (1921–2006), in the eleventh and twelfth centuries over four-fifths of all landholding households (or slightly more than half of all registered households) owned no more than twenty *mu*, far from enough to support a normal household of five or six members.⁵¹

Thus, in a vast countryside with considerable regional variations and inequality in landed wealth, the most basic and common unit of agricultural ownership and production was a peasant household which tilled its own land, as well as part of another's as a tenant or hired laborer. Tenancy, far more common in south than in north China, received backing from the government principally through a variety of laws, most of them penal. Those tenants regarded as servants (*p'u*, *nu-p'u*, *tien-p'u*) were restricted from pressing charges against their master and were harshly punished for offenses committed against their master and his family. In addition, from the late eleventh century, those tenants not classified as servants – often called tenant guests (*tien-k'o*) – but found guilty of committing a crime against their master and his family were to be punished one grade more severely than a commoner guilty of the same offense; in contrast, landlords received reduced punishments for all offenses against their tenant guests, except for attempted murder, theft, and deception. In c. 1132 the government extended, by one more grade, the penal differential between tenant guests and landlords for the murder of one another; subsequently, some landlords are said to have killed their disobedient tenant guests. Even those who refrained from such cruelty would have been greatly strengthened by these legal protections in virtually all dealings with their tenants (hence, some have argued, the infrequency of serious peasant rebellions during the Sung in comparison with later dynasties without such controls).

Yet, in the long run, these penal laws mattered less for the working of Sung tenancy arrangements than did local tenancy customs, at least in south China (those in north China remain virtually unrecorded). The farther one travelled down the Yangtze river from the mountains of K'uei-chou to the lowlands of the Yangtze delta and then the southeast coastal regions, the less direct control a landlord tended to have over his tenants. Landlords in Ching-hu-pei might rely on commitments of hereditary servitude and dependence to assure a regular labor supply and thus their harvests. Yet in Chiang-nan-tung, Liang-che, and Fu-chien, landlords found other means to protect their own harvest returns. They relied on penal privileges, tenant debt, and severe land shortages

⁵¹ Yanagida Setsuko, "Sōdai gōson no katōko ni tsuite," in her *Sō Gen gōson sei no kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1986), pp. 191–229.

to retain some social control over their tenants, restrain tenant demands for lower rents, and prevent, if only temporarily, their tenants' use of the land for a second grain crop destined primarily or entirely for the tenants' benefit.

The regional variations in this broadly brushed description of land-tenure arrangements were not accidental. They correlate well with the regional shifts in the identity of the shortages – from labor to land – that landlords tended to suffer over this thousand-mile stretch of land from the upper Yangtze valley to the China Sea. Thus, overall, the greater productivity of the southeast quarter as opposed to the southwest quarter of the country (including Ching-hu-pei and Ching-hu-nan) would seem to correlate with the varying degrees or types of independence enjoyed by tenants in these different regions. The higher production and income levels evident in the former arrangements were not due solely to superior tools, irrigation infrastructure, and farming practices.

If Sung landlords were thereby encouraged to invest in arable land, the same could be said for tenants asked or obliged to invest their time and labor in the more productive circuits of southeast and south central China. Tenant guests there normally paid as rent a fixed amount of rice every year. They could retain the rest of their principal rice crop, eventually all other grain and vegetable crops on this tenanted land, and also full, or virtually full, control of their own and their family's labor after the harvesting of the principal grain crop. Indeed, they would seem to have often enjoyed, by custom, relatively secure tenancy on their plots; their tenancy contracts commonly did not specify the tenancy's duration or termination, and eviction was backed by law only when tenants were remiss in their rent or committed another crime.⁵²

Other kinds of tenancy, commonly practiced in middle Yangtze circuits of Chiang-nan-hsi, Ching-hu-nan, Ching-hu-pei, and K'uei-chou, did not provide tenants with these economic opportunities and material incentives. They often entailed attachment to a landlord as an agricultural bondservant or to his land, roughly, as a serf. Yet it is noteworthy that both of these relatively servile kinds of tenant suffered no known legal restraint on their own accumulation of land and other forms of wealth. Agricultural bondservants (*tien-p'u*, *t'ien-p'u*) were ordinarily attached to their landlord's household. And yet they could still possess their own land, oxen, money, and other material possessions; they could be hired as seasonal, long-distance porters by other masters; and they even could receive rent payments from their own tenants. Furthermore, their duties were usually term-fixed rather than permanent or hereditary, since most were essentially hired laborers, indentured until either their set term of service

⁵² Sudō Yoshiyuki, "Sōdai tenkō no santensei – kanden o chūshin to shite," and "Shinhen shiwen reiyō kikan seisen no seiritsu nendai to sono naka no keiyaku shōsho to no kankei," in his *Tō Sō shakai keizaisbi kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1965), pp. 147–78 and 921–9, esp. 929.

ended or until they or others paid back a debt. Thus agricultural bondservants working under such conditions, so long as they could find the time, would have been motivated to acquire their own wealth so as to hasten or prepare for their release from servitude.

Even hereditary tenant cultivators like **land guests (*tí-k'ò*)**, who were bound to their master's land roughly like serfs, were not barred from such acquisitions. They had to pay rent for working their master's fields, provide him with free manual labor in the slack season; permit him to use their sons for unpaid servile labor and for obligatory succession to their tenancy; and **allow him to take on their daughters as maidservants, wives, or concubines**. Yet they too could inherit and purchase land and have another till their land as a tenant. If even these general bondservants, agricultural servants, and land guests could legally – and sometimes actually – enjoy these options, it is hard to see how the operation of private landownership practices would not have increased the interest of households of all legal statuses – official, commoner, and servant – in acquiring landed property and gaining improved returns from their financial and labor investments.

Finally, land and personnel organization also tended to promote production increases. The common practice of partible inheritance of land and, in south China, the wide inequality in land distribution arguably suited the particular need of rice paddy farming for tiny plots with level field bases and tightly controlled water flow. **The consequent patchwork of paddy fields, once widely condemned by Western experts as inefficient, is now more properly understood as generally favourable for increases in rice production.**⁵³

The organization of agricultural labor showed similar degrees of variation and flexibility. Tenants bound to their master or to his land tended to live in houses that he owned and maintained close to his own residence. Yet such assemblies of tenant bondservants, intended primarily for protection and service needs, were not common east of Lake Tung-t'ing, since few landlords owned enough land – at least thirty *mu* of paddy fields per tenant household – to provide full support for such households. In the middle and lower Yangtze valley and the southeast coast, far more common were those tenants who held few, if any, obligations to their master other than working in his fields and paying rent on the principal crop and any borrowed ox and tools. Quite likely, few of these tenant cultivators would have relied on just one landlord for all the land they farmed. Instead, most had some land of their own, produced most of the food they consumed, lived in their own house apart from the master, and dealt with any relatively large landlord primarily through a manager

⁵³ Francesca Bray, *Agriculture*, Part 2 of *Biology and biological technology*, Volume 6 of *Science and civilisation in China*, ed. Joseph Needham (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 106–7.

who collected their rent but seldom supervised their work. They could end their tenancy after a harvest, did little if any extra labor service, and did not transmit these duties to their offspring. These tenants sought to change tenancy terms mainly through requests for rent and labor reductions as well as for grain relief in time of famine. In other words, since Sung tenants had a great variety of economic links to other parties, Sung landlords were, particularly in the southeast lowlands, often freed from any contractual or even customary responsibility for the maintenance of their tenants, especially the tenant guests.

If Sung landownership and tenure arrangements, then, can be generally understood as providing incentives for all parties to increase production, they also were adapted by the same parties to their own social needs. They should also be seen as key components in the maintenance of complex networks of patron–client relations in a countryside with, as we have seen, harshly unreliable harvests that could threaten acute famine. Powerful landlords often gained extralegal influence over their inferiors' arrangements for local military formations, marriages, and civil service entrance requirements, even as they sought to forge close ties with officials and government clerks. But, since their relative status and power were not secure, they regularly encountered competition and opposition from other families with their own patron–client networks and similar aims. Thus what many landlords and tenants alike sought was a multiplicity of patron–client contacts rather than the attainment of freedoms that promised few, if any, certain rewards in a world where security usually mattered most.

Farm tools and draft animals

The variety of regional production levels and land-tenure arrangements was rivaled in the Sung by remarkable variations in regional farm-tool complexes attributable to their different soils, their different farming traditions, and some important regional innovations. In the dryland areas of north China, especially in the primary loess lands of the northwest, peasants used an assortment of light ploughs, ards, tinned harrows, bush harrows, and rollers. These tools allowed only shallow tillage, so as to protect the soil from wind erosion and evaporation. To the east, by contrast, in the heavier clay soils of the north Central Plain (*Chung-yüan*), drainage had often been a problem. And so, despite this region's repeated trouble with drought in the Northern Sung, its farmers commonly continued to use heavy-turn ploughs with mould boards along with strong metal-tined harrows.

From the Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220) through the Sung dynasty the farm-tool complexes of these two northern areas had consistently included

the square frame plough, the flat harrow (to pulverize the soil), and the brush harrow (to flatten the soil).⁵⁴ Nonetheless, these complexes experienced four important changes from the seventh century to the fourteenth. First, from the late T'ang the coulter was commonly made of cast iron. Its blade, now stronger and larger, was curved to cut more sharply and deeply into the soil, thereby halving the labor needed to open and farm land. It was obviously more suited to the Central Plain than to the drier northwest. Second, in north China a small sharp share (*ch'an*) was commonly used to open land, while in south China a broader, more intricately structured share (*bua*) was widely used to turn over already tilled soil; both were said to be more effective and labor-efficient than the parts they replaced. Third, the plough's attachment to the ox (or to oxen) was made both more sturdy and flexible, with the substitution of metal hooks for ropes and with the improvement of ox collars through the introduction of shoulder yokes, tillage trays (*keng-p'an*), and tillage ropes. Fourth, the overall construction of the plough was simplified, its parts numbering no more than eleven, by the elimination of such parts as the mould board brace and press share; by the substitution of other parts like the plough's adjustor – the bolt and the arrow – by a wooden wedge inserted at the intersection of the handle and the beam; and by the introduction of the curved beam (of which more below). The farmer could thereby more accurately control the depth to which the plough's blade would cut into the soil and so help him preserve in the northwest, or reduce in the northeast, the soil's water level and water supply.

In the Yangtze delta the standard tool complex for preparing rice fields up to recent times – the plough, flat harrow, and vertical harrow – was set by the late T'ang. In the southeast farmers also benefited from other improvements such as the forked hoe and weeding claw for digging up roots, various toothed harrows for pulverizing the soil, and rollers for levelling it. But the crucial, and new, implement in the lower Yangtze complex of farm tools came from north China in the late T'ang. Known as the curved beam plough, this tool was light and flexible enough to allow paddy farmers to control more easily the depth of the furrow as well as to use just one ox to open up and farm paddy fields.⁵⁵ It may well have been instrumental in encouraging small-scale landownership as it reduced the amount of capital many small landowners or cultivators needed to reclaim lowlands in the Yangtze delta. That arrangement, however, would have been sorely tested by numerous floods, harvest failures, and demographic pressure that helped the wealthy and well-connected to realize the economic

⁵⁴ Watabe Takeshi, "Tō Riku Kibō no 'Raishikei' to kyōkuenri no seiritsu," *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 48 No. 3 (December 1989), pp. 60–88.

⁵⁵ Li Po-chung, *T'ang-tai Chiang-nan nung-yeh te fa-chan* (Peking, 1990), pp. 73–98; and Ōsawa Masaaki, *Tō Sō benkakuki nōgyō shakaishi kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1996).

potential of the lowlands through the creation of large-scale polders and other land enclosures, especially during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Seen in such terms, these changes in tool complexes arguably led to a significant expansion in south China's agricultural production. Yet such a conclusion is presently far from certain, if only because their adoption was far from universal and often not necessary. The curved beam plough, for instance, ended up used less than the step-treadle plough in Liang-huai (Huan-nan-hsi lu and Huan-nan-tung lu) and Kuang-nan-hsi, the spade in K'uei-chou circuit, and the human body (or step-treadle) in parts of Ho-pei, Ho-nan, and Ching-hu-pei. This mixed reception can in part be explained in terms of these circuits' differing supply of iron for the plough's blade and draft animals for labor. Iron ore required for the blade was generally available in north China (the iron mines were mainly located there, with 80 percent of the empire-wide tax quota of 1068 levied on government-supervised mines in just the northern border areas of Ho-pei, Ho-tung, and Yung-hsing-chün). But in north China draft animals, especially oxen, were in short supply. In south China, by contrast, the shortage was more in iron ore deposits despite the large number of illegally operated private mines (located, like the government-operated mines, in the uplands of Fu-chien, Chiang-nan-hsi, and Chiang-nan-tung). In contrast to north China, much of the south enjoyed an adequate supply of draft animals. Horses were numerous in Huai-nan, Szechwan, and southwestern Kuang-nan-hsi, and oxen in many parts, especially in the far south and southwest. When transported into the Yangtze valley or farther north, these oxen were welcomed by needy farmers. But, even in wealthy areas many a peasant household found these southern oxen too expensive, particularly when considering their short working life and vulnerability to endemic diseases. Many peasants then ended up borrowing or renting a landlord's ox for as much as 10 percent of their principal rice harvest, or they relied on human labor to pull a curved beam plough, stamp a step-treadle plough into the soil, or plough with a spade, even though an ox-drawn plough could reportedly plough two or even five times more land in a day than a step-treadle plough.

In those areas of south China where the curved beam plough appears to have been widely adopted – Liang-che, Fu-chien, Chiang-nan-hsi, and Chiang-nan-tung – the grain production levels were among the highest in the empire, and that success must in part be attributed to their adoption of this plough. Yet quite likely it played a less important role in production increases than some Chinese and many Western historians all too readily assume. Not only was its full promise realized only later with technical additions like the iron-drag hoe in the Yüan dynasty (1260–1368), but also the size of a rice harvest, as Sung and modern Chinese agronomists have rightly and repeatedly insisted, is most decisively influenced by the adequate provision of water and labor at the

appropriate times; that is, through a far less mechanical form of technology than ploughs and harrows. Technical changes were important, but they should be seen in terms of the inconspicuous, low-cost nature of many improvements to wet-rice cultivation required by the small scale of rice paddy farming and by a preference to develop human skills and practices rather than tools per se.⁵⁶ Certainly, Sung and later writers on agrarian matters confer more importance on field practices than on technology,⁵⁷ as when the celebrated Confucian scholar Lu Chiu-yüan (1139-93) attributed his family's farming success to the way it used its hoe rather than to the type of their hoe or even their plough.⁵⁸ In sum, after the establishment of settled paddy field farming in south China, the spread of improved farm tools and draft animals, even where adequate, played an important, but not the major, role in the Sung expansion of grain production.

Land expansion

North China After the Sung forces gained control over the entire empire in 979, much land in north China remained untilled. Prefectures in the Central Plain that had suffered great disruption from warfare during the tenth century, such as Cheng-chou, Hsü-chou, and Ts'ai-chou, had three-quarters of their farmland reported as uncultivated even as late as 996. Conditions improved, at least in hindsight, during the first two decades of the eleventh century, prompting an official to claim about the area of modern Shantung that its "people were rich and numerous, with everyone at this time taking delight in his occupation."

Yet over the first century of Sung rule all the circuits along the northern border suffered sharp contractions in their cultivated acreage and production. Nature and man seem to have conspired to impede any significant long-term expansion of their arable by wreaking considerable damage on their environment.⁵⁹ Thus land expansion up into the mountains or valleys led to counterproductive environmental problems of increased deforestation and desiccation. In Yung-hsing-chün, the Kuan-chung basin and its surrounding mountains had in the T'ang already suffered great deforestation; in the Sung

⁵⁶ Francesca Bray, *The rice economies: Technology, and development in Asian societies* (Oxford and New York, 1986), esp. pp. 113-24. "The inconspicuous, low-cost nature of many improvements to wet-rice cultivation" is Bray's formulation.

⁵⁷ Ōsawa Masaaki, *Chin Fu "Nōshō" no kenkyū: 12 seiki Higashi Ajia inasaku no tōtatsuten* (Tōkyō, 1993), esp. pp. 47-8; and Chang Li-hsiang, *Pu Nung shu chiao-shih*, ed. Ch'en Heng-li and Wang Ta (Peking, 1983), pp. 25-78, which devotes many pages to fertilizer and none to agricultural equipment.

⁵⁸ Lu Chiu-yüan, *Lu Chiu-yüan chi*, ed. Chung Che (Peking, 1980) 34, p. 424.

⁵⁹ Cheng Hsüeh-meng, *Chung-kuo ku-tai ching-chi chung-hsin nan-i ho T'ang Sung Chiang-nan ching-chi yen-chiu* (Ch'ang-sha, 1996), pp. 36-42.

signs of serious tree loss spread westward up the Wei river valley and northward into central Yung-hsing-chün.⁶⁰ In Ho-tung the cultivation of the upper mountain slopes led to the extensive felling of trees, such as in the area south of Mount Lü-liang in central Shan-hsi. Ho-nan's forest coverage by the late sixth century was, by one rough estimate, just 15 to 20 percent of its total land area; in the Northern Sung its ceramic and iron industries proceeded to consume much of the remaining forestwood, resulting in deforestation to the north of Mount Fu-niu in northern Ho-nan as well as in many of its southern hills.⁶¹ The tree growth lost in much of north China would seem to have often been pine: by the late eleventh century, all pine trees were said to have disappeared in the area of modern Shantung and to have been grown mainly as young seedlings in Shan-hsi and Ho-nan.

Three serious consequences of this deforestation were soil erosion, repeated flooding, and eventually, if paradoxically, desiccation. The deforested uplands of Yung-hsing-chün, Ho-tung, and even Ho-pei were used for pasturing, a change in land usage that led to extensive loss of topsoil. Sheep chewed up roots that had retained soil after the earlier felling of trees, and the dislodged soil flowed down as silt into river valleys and lakes. Consequently, the bed of the lower reaches of the Yellow River rose, causing far more floods than ever before (in Ho-pei alone it broke through giant dikes at least eighty-five times in the first century of Sung rule).⁶² When the floodwaters eventually retreated, they left behind piles of silt in the beds of lakes and ponds. Over time this repeated siltage led to the disappearance of large lakes in Ho-pei, Ho-tung, Yung-hsing-chün, and Ching-tung (where in fact rice paddy agriculture seems to have ceased by the eleventh century) as well as to the despoliation of the relatively fertile stretches of eastern and southern Ho-pei. By the mid-eleventh century, 40–50 percent of the land in seven prefectures there was judged untillable. Partly as a result of these changes, drought in Ho-pei was reported roughly three times more often in the Northern Sung than in the T'ang.⁶³

In this sorry tale of environmental deterioration one needs to mention the contributions of the Chinese government and the Chinese peasant. Despite the end of the equitable-fields system of land tenure, the Sung government remained an important force in the rural economy of north China (more so than in south China). Its impact there, however, was far from positive. Rare is it, even in Chinese history, to find a government so intent on destroying its

⁶⁰ Shih Nien-hai, *Ho-shan chi* (Peking, 1988), Volume 3, pp. 55–83, 136–43.

⁶¹ Hsü Hai-liang, "Li-tai chung-chou sen-lin pien-ch'ien," *Chung-kuo nung-shih* No. 4 (1988), pp. 98–110; and Shih Nien-hai, *Ho-shan chi* (Peking, 1981), Volume 2, p. 26.

⁶² Shih, *Ho-shan chi*, Volume 3, pp. 144–55.

⁶³ Cheng, *Chung-kuo ku-tai ching-chi chung-hsin nan-i ho T'ang Sung Chiang-nan ching-chi yen-chiu*, pp. 36–7.

physical environment and its traditional fiscal base as during the Sung. For when it was not deliberately turning north China's farmland into wasteland, pastureland, or ponds, it was causing extensive havoc to its subjects by trying to enrich its soil through the regular flooding of their villages. It is no surprise to learn that those areas of north China which most pitilessly cast their poor as refugees onto the capital during north China's three major rural crises in the eleventh century were those very areas where the Sung government most persistently implemented its defense and land-reclamation policies. The often weary and abandoned countryside of north China was the result of man-made decisions as much as of any bad weather changes or peasant preference for an easier life in the south.

The man-made destruction of the northern environment was evident in Ho-tung from the start to the end of the Northern Sung. The site of the last north China kingdom to succumb to Sung rule, Ho-tung suffered great suspicion from the new dynasty. Its capital was razed, and much of the population in its northern half was forcibly moved to south of the Yellow River. Its border prefectures subsequently became a no-man's-land with, by 1045, over 2 million *mu* of fields abandoned or at best turned into pastureland.⁶⁴ Even after reforms in 1055 had given soldiers there 960,000 *mu* to till and live on, over a million *mu* of border fields remained off-limits.⁶⁵ Kaoliang and millet were the circuit's most commonly grown grains, while the more productive grains like barley and wheat remained virtually unplanted in its northern half throughout the Northern Sung.⁶⁶

The human destruction of Ho-pei's environment was on an even greater scale, and inflicted a considerable loss of arable land.⁶⁷ Its principal harvest, since at least the mid-T'ang, is thought to have been winter wheat, serving as the central crop for a three-crops-in-two-years rotation schedule along with vegetables and millet. Such a crop rotation was followed especially in the western prefectures at the foot of the T'ai-hang mountain range. But human error and misfortune ensured that long stretches of land along Ho-pei's northern frontier and in its central regions provided little, if any, produce. After the Khitan in 935 seized 20 percent of the territory of T'ang dynasty Ho-pei, the border area suffered greatly from Sung military defeats and policy decisions. Fearful of rebellion by any troops stationed along this border, the Sung kept most of its troops in the capital and put them under close surveillance. Thus, when its military effort to recover the lost land in Ho-pei was thwarted by

⁶⁴ Ch'eng, *Sung-tai ti-yü ching-chi*, p. 45; and Hu Tao-hsiu, "Sung-tai jen-k'ou te fen-pu yu pien-ch'ien," in *Sung Liao Chin shih lun-tsung* (Peking, 1991), Volume 2, pp. 93-131.

⁶⁵ HCP (1979) 178, p. 9316. ⁶⁶ Ch'eng, *Sung-tai ti-yü ching-chi*, p. 45.

⁶⁷ Han Mou-li, "Sung-tai Ho-pei te nung-yeh sheng-ch'an yu chu-yao liang-shih tso-wu," *Chung-kuo nung-shih* 3 (1993), pp. 27-32; and Nagase Mamoru, *Sō Gen suirishi kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1983), pp. 155-280.

the Khitan in 1005, it decided to defend itself by turning most of the highly productive soil in Ho-pei's border prefectures into dams and reservoirs, so as to thwart the predicted onrush of Khitan cavalry. In the mid-eleventh century annual flooding from reservoirs in counties along Ho-pei's northern border prevented any good summer or fall harvest.⁶⁸ In other parts of Ho-pei, in prefectures like Chao-chou, and Ming-chou, much agricultural land was turned into pastureland for Sung government horses and livestock. By the 1050s such pasture land, totaling 1.5 million *mu*, was estimated to account for 40 percent of Ho-pei's potential acreage. If one adds to these dismal figures the "incalculable amount of land" simply abandoned, made barren, or turned into swamps, and recalls the repeatedly poor summer and fall harvests in the border counties during the eleventh century,⁶⁹ then Ho-pei's fall from its seventh- and eighth-century heights as the granary of north China signaled the end of an age. Henceforth, north China, and especially this region, would no longer reign as the center of the Chinese economy.

In Yung-hsing-chün the changes were eventually less destructive. After its great prosperity in the early and mid-T'ang, it fell into serious decline, particularly in its western regions. Border troubles persisted well into the Northern Sung, with Su Shih (1037–1101) reporting in c.1060 that the Western Hsia (Hsi Hsia) invasion of 1038–40 had led to the Sung's abandonment of all the fields in the northwest of Ch'in-feng circuit and the disappearance of two-thirds of Yung-hsing-chün's wealth. In the densely populated Wei river valley, the political troubles of the late T'ang and the tenth century had inflicted serious damage on the area's famous irrigation system. Only after repeated efforts failed to raise its acreage significantly over its early Sung level of 200,000 *mu* did further decades of government-backed irrigation-revival projects there succeed towards the close of the eleventh century. Yet the area's eventual peak figures of 600,000 *mu* at mid-century and slightly higher by c.1080 still fell far below the 4,450,000 *mu* total in the Ch'in and Han dynasties (221 BC–AD 220).

Finally, there is the fate of the great Central Plain circuits that had for millennia served as the center of the Chinese empires. Ho-nan's population had dropped drastically during the Five Dynasties, and the new Sung government was only partly successful in attracting settlers back to its abandoned fields; for example, a century of peace and strenuous official efforts left T'ang-chou in c.1065 with a registered population of just 11,380 households, a mere third of its level back in 755. At first, Wang An-shih's agricultural policies from

⁶⁸ Han, "Sung-tai Ho-pei te nung-yeh sheng-ch'an yu chu-yao liang-shih tso-wu," pp. 27–32; and Nagase, *Sō Gen suirishī kenkyū*, pp. 155–280.

⁶⁹ Pao Cheng, *Pao Cheng chi pien-nien chiao-p'ü*, ed. Yang Kuo-i (Ho-fei, 1987), p. 237.

1069 to 1079 offered some hope of a revival of the Central Plain's agriculture, when he ordered the flooding of vast stretches of farmland with fertile river mud. While some increases in production and productivity were subsequently reported along the Pien river and in central Ho-pei, this policy of deliberate flooding had the undesirable consequence of uprooting thousands of villages and disrupting their own production. Also, it was often undertaken without adequate knowledge of local soil conditions, riverbed levels, water supplies, and even the ordinary course of rivers. Thus, in the end, it proved far more destructive than ever expected and never achieved its principal aim of expanding the arable land and increasing production enough to make the north self-sufficient in grain.

South China, uplands South China's original method of agriculture was swidden farming, a relatively primitive type of agriculture that required first the felling and then the burning of all vegetation and trees on a site.⁷⁰ Once cleared, the enriched soil would be seeded for a few years, before the natural depletion of its nutrients would force the farmers to find another site nearby. In early imperial times, this "slash-and-burn" method of farming evolved, as a growing population came to depend heavily on agricultural production.⁷¹ Lowland farmers in south China tended to devote more time to their farmwork and correspondingly less to other productive and nonproductive activities (e.g. hunting and fishing). With open land less available, they also tended to move away less frequently, sometimes limiting their movements to annual shifts back and forth between two adjacent plots. Eventually some lowland areas were permanently settled, while other areas requiring more investment than then seemed profitable continued to be slashed and burned in the traditional manner. By the end of the Han, swidden farming was practiced mainly south of the Yangtze in places like the lowlands and highlands of the P'o-yang lake basin (yet note its survival as well in the mountains of Ho-tung in the tenth century).

Thus it was only during the T'ang that farmers in much of the Yangtze valley broke free of this ancient set of practices. Their careful nurturing and adaptation of the region's resources to the goal of increased rice production eventually enabled south China's population to outnumber north China's in the eleventh century, for the first time in recorded Chinese history. The Yangtze valley's primitive technology, minimal reliance on waterworks, and

⁷⁰ E.g. Watabe Tadayo and Sakurai Yūmio, *Chūgoku Kōnan no inasaku bunka: Sono gakusai teki kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1984), pp. 1-54.

⁷¹ For Sung accounts, see SS (1980) 293, p. 9794; Fan Ch'eng-ta, *Shih-hu chü-shih chi* (Hong Kong, 1974) 16, p. 217; Yang I, *Yang wen kung t'an-wan*, ed. Li Yü-min (Shanghai, 1993), p. 35; and Ōsawa, *Tō Sō benkakuki nōgyō shakaishi kenkyū*, pp. 159-93.

requisite low population density gave way to the use of a more productive complex of farm tools, a greater dependence on planned irrigation, and a more settled population devoted mainly to the practice of rice agriculture.⁷² Rice seeds began to be carefully reared into shoots in side gardens or pots before being transplanted six weeks later to paddy fields and thereafter regularly fertilized. Dams, ditches, and reservoirs were built in increasing numbers. And settled rice farming was established as the norm, allowing in places for a far more intensive and productive use of farmland.⁷³ According to one twelfth-century official in Ching-hu-pei, swidden fields were half as productive as dryland farming and a quarter as productive as paddy fields. The switch from swidden farming to paddy fields, be it in the highlands of ninth- and tenth-century Liang-che or the valleys of twelfth- and thirteenth-century K'uei-chou, inevitably required greater inputs of labor, fertilizer, time, and money. The resulting long-term rise in rice output facilitated the eventual Han Chinese conquest of the uplands of the southwest along lines that were accomplished in most of the rest of the Yangtze valley by the Sung.⁷⁴ This transformation of the southern landscape into settled, rice-producing paddies may well have diminished the south's ecological variety and have thus reduced the average annual calorie consumption of its now far more numerous residents. If, then, per-capita consumption in south China over the long, if not short, run may have suffered, nonetheless the expansion of the arable land in south China undeniably enabled it to reverse its millennia-old inferiority to north China in terms of population, production, and productivity.

Thus, by Sung times paddy field farming was the predominant form of arable land use in south China. Its acceptance and spread in much of southeast China from the ninth century to the late thirteenth falls into three stages: the extension of traditional irrigation techniques, particularly in the P'o-yang lake basin in the ninth and tenth centuries; the introduction and spread of Champa rice, especially in the uplands of the Yangtze valley and the southeast littoral in the eleventh century; and the development of large-scale polders in delta areas, especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In all cases, water control and water substitution proved essential for the successful spread of this crop so dependent on regular supplies of water. The role of the government in these changes is sometimes emphasized in official sources. But the brunt of the work in this great transformation was undertaken by Chinese farmers, both individually and collectively.

⁷² Ōsawa, *Tō Sō benkakuki nōgyō shakaishi kenkyū*, pp. 79–124.

⁷³ Ōsawa, *Tō Sō benkakuki nōgyō shakaishi kenkyū*, pp. 197–234.

⁷⁴ Ōsawa, *Tō Sō benkakuki nōgyō shakaishi kenkyū*, pp. 159–93. Swidden farming did not entirely disappear in the southeast; for example, portions of the uplands in Fu-chien were too infertile to support settled agriculture and so were still being "slashed and burned" in the sixteenth century.

The classic example of this type of private land development was terraced fields (*t'i-t'ien*). This term appears to have been coined in 1172 to describe layers of rice fields sliced out of precipitous mountain slopes by farmers in Yüan-chou in Chiang-nan-hsi.⁷⁵ But Chinese farmers had actually been doing such backbreaking work in a piecemeal way for over a millennium. The difference in the late T'ang and early Sung accomplishments was both quantitative and qualitative, since the influx of people into the mountainous areas vastly expanded the practice of settled agriculture and led to the establishment of a new form of rural order in these mountains. Fleeing war, military and labor corvées, and landlord aggrandizement in the lowlands, peasants settled deeper into the mountain areas of the middle Yangtze and Fu-chien. Some of them were "Hakka migrants" making their way to southern Chiang-hsi and Fu-chien. But most were Han people whose settlement of the uplands inevitably brought them into conflict with local tribes who had traditionally practiced swidden farming. Like some of the aboriginal peoples here, they eked out a living by, among other things, mining; by pasturing oxen, sheep, and horses; by growing hemp and mulberry trees; and by practicing some rice farming high in the mountains.

Gradually their efforts became more systematic. With minimal help or encouragement from their government, these peasants and landowners, including Buddhist monks and monasteries, transformed the landscape. They had terraced farming replace most of the practice of swidden farming in the hilly areas of present-day southern Anhwei, Che-tung, Kiangsi, and Fu-chien (where, by the late eleventh century, mountains are described as having "layers upon layers" of hillside). In contrast to swidden farming, terraced agriculture was more settled and needed far less land, two strong arguments for its use at a time of growing population pressure on limited supplies of land. Although it consequently required more regular investment of labor and fertilizer, it imposed order on once unruly mountainscapes and quite likely reduced soil depletion (not least because of its retention of some stream silt and its regular use of fertilizer). Certainly, its small-scale irrigation works were eventually more productive than some larger ones in the lowlands, prompting one mid-twelfth-century official to observe that in Chiang-nan-hsi many of the best fields were located in the mountains.⁷⁶

South China, the conquest by rice The southern crop sown in these fields was rice, a grain that has certain clear advantages over other grains for supporting a large

⁷⁵ Liang Chia-mien, "Chung-kuo ti-t'ien k'ao: Tsu-kuo te ch'u-hsien chi ch'i fa-chan," in *Liang Chia-mien nung-shih wen-chi*, ed. Ni Ken-chin (Peking, 2002), pp. 218-37.

⁷⁶ SHY (1965), *shih-huo* 7, pp. 46b-47a.

and growing population as in eleventh-century China. Its ready adaptability to a wide variety of ecologies, its virtually unsurpassed productivity (only maize, introduced to China in the sixteenth century, has higher yields per acre), and its high yield-to-seed ratio made rice attractive to subsistence farmers.⁷⁷ Grown in south China by no later than c.5000 BC, it was widely cultivated in the lowlands throughout the south by T'ang times.⁷⁸ The highlands, according to Ōsawa Masaaki, remained much less receptive to its seeding in any form of settled agriculture. Only from the mid-eighth century, at roughly the time when rice cultivation started to decline in the north, did it gain ultimately far greater acceptance in the south. Thus, although a mildly unsatisfactory harvest would drive many peasants in both mountainous and lowland parts of south China to consume grain kernels or dig up wild roots for their hungry stomachs, rice became the crop of preference and principal grain in south China, even for non-Han minorities in parts of the undeveloped modern Yunnan–Kuei-chou plateau. By 1054 it was reportedly grown on 80 or 90 percent of all fields in the Chiang-Huai region and on a similarly high portion of land in the four interior prefectures of mid-Southern Sung Fu-chien, and to be very widespread even in Kuang-nan-tung, where the T'ang preference for Chinese yams survived in backward areas.⁷⁹ Rice's conquest of much of the southern landscape appears, then, to have coincided with the settlement of the south in the late T'ang and early Sung, with the subsequent development of the highlands, and with the great population increase in this area.

The story of rice cultivation in Sung China, however, is far more complex than just this notable spread in its cultivation. First, there is the significant increase in its seed varieties. The number of rice seed varieties known to be used in the Western Chin dynasty (265–316) was thirteen, in the Northern Wei (386–534) twenty-five, in the T'ang twenty-five (of which eighteen had new names and fifteen came from the lower and middle Yangtze valley), and in the Sung well over 139 (the Chinese scholar Yu Hsiu-ling has put the total as high as 301, of which 212 were new).⁸⁰ Despite this recorded increase, all these figures are clearly gross underestimates (presently some 3,000 varieties of rice seed are grown in China), and those for the Sung probably most so. Not only do the extant agricultural treatises from the T'ang through the Yüan

⁷⁷ Bray, *The rice economies*, pp. 12–15.

⁷⁸ An Chih-min, "Chung-kuo te shih-ch'ien nung-yeh," *K'ao-ku hsüeh-pao* No. 4 (1988), pp. 369–81; and Hua Lin-fu, "T'ang-tai shui-tao sheng-ch'an te ti-li pu-chu chi ch'i pien-ch'ien ch'u-t'an," *Chung-kuo nung-shih* No. 2 (1992), pp. 27–39.

⁷⁹ SHY (1965) *shih-buo* 7, p. 13b; and Shiba Yoshinobu, *Sōdai shōgyōshi kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1968), p. 148.

⁸⁰ Yu Hsiu-ling, "Chan-ch'eng tao-chih i," *Nung-yeh k'ao-ku* No. 1 (1983), pp. 25–32; see also his *Chung-kuo tao-tso shih* (Peking, 1995), p. 87. Donald Honey Grist, *Rice* (London, 1975), p. 92, notes that as of 1975 the International Rice Research Institute collection numbered over 14,700 varieties of rice seed worldwide.

name only one rice variety (Wang Chen's famous work, the *Agricultural treatise* (*Nung-shu*) of c. 1304, records none at all), but also these Sung figures are based primarily on an incomplete list compiled in c. 1090 for one county, T'ai-ho in Chi-chou in Chiang-nan-hsi, where farmers planted at least fifty-two and as many as seventy distinct rice seed varieties.⁸¹ Since 80-90 percent of this county's seed varieties (i.e. their names) are not recorded as grown elsewhere, it is easy to imagine the great variety of rice seeds already in use by the late eleventh century in the rest of south China.

Among these Sung rice seed varieties, one in particular stands out for helping to change the landscape of south China. Whereas, in Ho Ping-ti's words, "the main contribution of the T'ang period to rice culture was the development of a large number of late- and medium-ripening varieties which required fertile land,"⁸² in the Sung there developed a largely early-ripening rice seed variety, known as **Champa rice**, that hastened the spread of rice cultivation up the mountain slopes. Grown in Fu-chien (its name suggests its passage to China from the Champa kingdom in southern Vietnam) by the late tenth century, it was introduced on imperial orders to Liang-che, Chiang-nan-hsi, Chiang-nan-tung, and Huai-nan in the year 1011. Its quick growth, especially when transplanted as a seedling, offered the promise of more rapidly achieved harvests. Instead of the 150-day growing period then expected of late-ripening rice seed varieties, its harvest initially came 120 days after planting.

At first, the most attractive feature of this seed variety was its resistance to drought, thereby reducing (but not eliminating) the significance of water for a rice crop's success. Since its cultivation did not require considerable labor, time, and money investment in the infrastructure of rice irrigation, upland sites previously judged unsuitable for grain cultivation and lacking extensive irrigation facilities were now seeded with rice. Thus, within sixty years of its reported introduction to the Yangtze valley, one of its enthusiasts was trumpeting its success almost everywhere in China (its progress in some other parts was not as rapid and permanent as he supposed, since in the late sixteenth century Ch'ü-chou prefecture in the Liang-che-tung interior still did not plant Champa rice seeds⁸³). The circuits where it received the warmest reception were Fu-chien, Liang-che-tung, Chiang-nan-tung, Chiang-nan-hsi, and Huai-nan; that is, in the hills and dryland areas of the Yangtze valley and

⁸¹ Ts'ao Shu-chi, "Ho-p'u chi tso-che yen-chiu," *Chung-kuo nung-shih* No. 3 (1984), pp. 84-91; and "Ho-p'u chiao-shih," *Chung-kuo nung-shih* No. 1 (1985), pp. 74-84.

⁸² Ho Ping-ti, "Early-ripening rice in Chinese history," *Economic History Review*, new series 9 No. 2 (1956), esp. p. 206.

⁸³ Yu, "Chan-ch'eng tao-chih," p. 31.

the southeast.⁸⁴ The main areas that appear to have remained indifferent to its charms were Szechwan (perhaps because the record is so scant) and the polder areas of the lower Yangtze valley, where its productivity, taste, low price, general unacceptability for tax payments, and irrelevance to an area beset far more by floods than by drought won it relatively few users. In sum, Champa rice first proved popular in the areas that had marked up the greatest population increases between the 755 and c.1080 censuses. In all likelihood, then, the expansion of arable land and the widespread use of Champa rice seeds in these areas of southeast China account for much of south China's population increase between 742 and c.1080, especially in the eleventh century.

When placed in long-term perspective, few varieties of rice seed ever won as swift, extensive, and warm a reception in pre-twentieth-century China as did Champa rice. This success, despite its introduction to the Yangtze valley by the government, resulted primarily from private parties' recognition of its ability to reduce the threat of famine in their locales. Recall that Champa's success came *after* the south had started to ship 6.2 million bushels of rice every year to north China, *after* the Sung court in the year 1005 had agreed to pay the Liao court (Khitan, 907–1125) 500,000 bushels of rice a year as tribute, and that the Sung government as a rule did not accept Champa rice for tax payments. Only then can we understand the scale of its contribution to the south's private grain trade and consumption. Only then can we begin to appreciate the physical and mental relief as well as the sense of an expanding affluence that this sudden grain surplus must have conferred on many eleventh-century residents of south China at a time when devastating famines in north China convinced many of the persistence of a serious agricultural crisis there. And only then can we comprehend, in contrast, the confidence of southerners about the feasibility of agricultural and fiscal reforms in the court's political debates in the mid- and late eleventh century. In fact, the south, blessed with this abundance, produced enough surplus grain for its small farmers to buy the late-ripening rice the tax authorities required and for its prefectures to send on sizable amounts of their fall grain tax quota to the northern capital, K'ai-feng, right up to the end of the first Sung century.

South China, lowlands During the Sung the most dramatic examples of land development were the large-scale polders constructed out of marshes and lake bottoms in the Yangtze valley and the southeast coast.⁸⁵ Far more numerous

⁸⁴ Sudō Yoshiyuki, "Nan Sō ni okeru inu no shurui to hinshu no chikisei," in his *Sōdai keizai shi kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1962), pp. 139–206.

⁸⁵ Important studies of this land development include T'ai-hu ti-ch'u nung-yeh shih yen-chiu k'o-t'ai tsu, *T'ai-bu ti-ch'u nung-yeh shih kao*; Cheng Ch'i-ching, *T'ai-bu shui-li chi-shu shih* (Peking, 1987); Okuzaki Fumio and Ikeda Shizuo, *Kōnan bunka kaibatsu shi: Sono chiriteki kiso kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1940); Tamai Zehaku,

than earlier polders, these dike-enclosed lowlands ranged in size from a few marginal *mu* to more than 100,000 *mu* stretching across county boundaries. From the late T'ang to the early Sung many were built in four low-lying prefectures of Chiang-nan-tung – Chien-k'ang, T'ai-p'ing, Ning-kuo, and Kuang-te.⁸⁶ But the key center for their construction during the Sung was farther down the Yangtze in the Lake T'ai basin, long renowned as "the kingdom of marshes." Previous land reclamation in the delta had been concentrated in the foothills of Hang-chou and Hu-chou, in lowlands around Su-chou city, and along the Grand Canal.⁸⁷ In much of the delta's eastern half, however, much land remained unused and unusable for settled agriculture. Its development had long been retarded by the incursion of seawater as far westward as Lake T'ai. As archaeological surveys indicate, settlement of the eastern half of the delta expanded very little, if at all, between the third and sixth centuries. During the T'ang dynasty, however, signs of change came more quickly, with the establishment of twenty-seven garrisons (*t'un*) and their fields in the Chia-ho section, the repairs to canals, and the dredging of canals beside several long embankments. During the tenth century the regional government formed a complex network of north-south and east-west embankments that directed the flow of water rapidly out of the low-lying core of the delta.⁸⁸

From the eighth to the mid-eleventh century, the accumulation of silt from the Yangtze river and the ocean stretched the eastern coastline of the delta another thirty *li* eastward. This expanded area, with its spreading labyrinth of creeks and marshes, gradually became a center of land reclamation, especially with the construction of polders during the last two centuries of Sung rule. Although some recent studies have cast doubt on earlier claims of these polders' high production levels during the Sung, their soil and newly reclaimed fields were highly fertile and, once flooding was controlled, very productive. From the start of the eleventh century, southern circuits were every year to ship over 6.2 million bushels as their basic annual grain tax to the northern capital, 2 million more bushels to the capital and other parts of the empire as "Harmonious Purchase" (*ho-mai*) grain, and yet millions more as the basic food for people in south and even north China. The lower Yangtze delta prefectures were expected to contribute close to a third of this annual grain tax shipment from the south, even though disappointing harvest results sometimes prevented their full payment.

"Sōdai suiriden no ichitoku isō," in his *Shina shakai keizai shi kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1942), pp. 355–414; Sudō Yoshiyuki, "Sōdai Sessei chihō no eitan no hatten – tochi shoyusei to no kankei," in his *Sōdai shi kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1969), pp. 305–436; and Watabe and Sakurai, *Chūgoku Kōnan no inasaku bunka*, pp. 64–112.

⁸⁶ Sudō Yoshiyuki, "Sōdai no ūten to shōensei: Toki ni Kōnando ro ni tsuite," in his *Sōdai keizai shi kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1962), pp. 363–431.

⁸⁷ Shiba, *Sōdai Kōnan keizai shi no kenkyū*, pp. 184–6.

⁸⁸ Cheng, *T'ai-bu shui-li chi-shu shih*, pp. 82–7.

The government's attitude to the construction of polders in the delta regularly shifted, and so its overall impact was at best inconsistent and often confusing. Its tax policy favored land investment and development; for example, in 980 it reduced Su-chou's annual grain tax quota from 700,000 to 300,000 bushels; sometimes actually collected no more than 200,000 bushels a year; and until at least the 1030s taxed little, if any, of the newly reclaimed land. Yet, during the eleventh and later centuries, it regularly outlawed the reclamation of lake-bottom fields and the construction of polders, since its officials commonly claimed that such expansion of the arable land encouraged flooding that reduced annual grain production by as much as 50–60 percent.

The delta's trouble with water had many causes. The riverbeds expected to drain its central areas of their excess water tended to have an upward incline. The silt that was constantly extending the coastline eastward regularly blocked the mouth of the rivers and streams expected to drain off the water. The burgeoning population put ever greater pressure on the delta's limited land supply. The waterworks constructed and amalgamated during the tenth century at the urging of the Wu-yüeh kingdom (907–78) were overwhelmed by land reclamation efforts in the eleventh century and were poorly managed by the Sung government. And government drainage projects from 1035 onwards repeatedly had limited results. Improvement at one location commonly led to problems elsewhere. Frustrated by these failures, local groups disagreed violently among themselves about which policies were appropriate. Whereas some powerful landlords avidly reclaimed marshes and lake bottoms in flagrant disregard of the government's prohibition, others, especially those in the delta's core counties, strongly supported numerous eleventh-century decrees against further polder construction. They attributed the repeated flooding of their landholdings to the blockage of streams and rivers by downstream landlords seeking to build their own polders.⁸⁹

Fu-chien Along the southeast coast also, arable land was expanded through enclosure, drainage, and reclamation. Despite the narrowness of its plains this transformation eventually attained a size and complexity required by the increasing scale of its population and its fields' greater need for irrigation control. Before the Sung, coastal land reclamation in Fu-chien was usually small-scale, rarely concerned with more than 1,000 *mu*, and seldom located close to the county and prefectural seats. The huge immigration to Fu-chien since the late T'ang, resulting in a tenfold increase in its registered households by c. 1080, brought about a change in these conditions. The expansion of

⁸⁹ Mira A. Mihelich, "Polders and the politics of land reclamation in southeast China during the Northern Sung dynasty (960–1126)" (diss., Cornell University, 1979).

cultivated land took place more quickly and more extensively. Whereas in the T'ang coastal dikes were built to keep out the sea, now they were also used to enclose fields formed by soil brought down from the mountains or in from the sea. In fact, by the close of the eleventh century, wave upon wave of ocean silt had stretched the coastline out into the sea some sixteen miles beyond its mid-T'ang shoreline. During the first two centuries of Sung rule the prefecture of Fu-chou thereby saw its registered arable land increase tenfold. By the late twelfth century – unfortunately, we have no eleventh-century figures – over 150 large-scale reservoirs and dams were recorded in its coastal area, enclosing 123,000 *mu* of newly made seafields and 27,190 *mu* of sand flats. These newly developed sand flats, once their soil was cleansed of its brackish content, often proved very productive. Farmers could switch from planting unproductive water grasses to transplanting rice seedlings estimated, or exaggerated, by some writers to have harvests as much as ten times greater than ordinary paddies. As a consequence, coastal water management shifted from dike construction and channel drainage to water storage and distribution for crop irrigation.

The most famous of all these Fu-chien coastal projects in the Sung was the Mulan Weir.⁹⁰ When first constructed in Hsing-hua commandery in 780–4, it irrigated 40,000 *mu*. But population pressure, government interest in land expansion during Wang An-shih's rule, and further sea dike construction prompted some local landlords and officials in 1075 to construct this reservoir to hold 366 inland mountain streams behind its thirty-two sluice gates. Local managers released the water at appropriate times through 116 channels to desalinize and irrigate nearly 1 million *mu* in over 100 villages. This success was extended in the mid-twelfth century, when another 10,000 *mu* were irrigated by this highly complex waterworks that now required over fourteen managers and regular funding from special government-owned fields. All this land development led to numerous conflicts among local landowners and cultivators. Unlike the Yangtze delta, however, the issue was not land expansion per se; few doubted the overwhelming need for this expansion. Instead, they argued over who had prior or primary access to the reservoir's water and mountain streams, since to them that made all the difference between bounty and hunger. And often the efforts succeeded: the Six-Village Weir constructed in the mid-eleventh century was even in Ming times "the largest water conservancy project in the district; no other weir or dam is even a hundredth of its size."⁹¹

⁹⁰ *P'u-t'ien shui-li chih* (1875 ed.; Taipei, 1974) 2, *passim*; and Cheng Chen-man and Kenneth Dean (Ting Ho-sheng), comp., *Fu-chien tsung-chiao pei-ming hui-pien: Hsing-hua-fu fen-ts'e* (Fu-chou, 1995), pp. 18–19.

⁹¹ Hugh R. Clark, *Community, trade, and networks: Southern Fujian province from the third to the thirteenth century* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 149–51.

Handicraft production

The somber record of frequent harvest troubles, even after the introduction of Champa rice and some success in land expansion, shows the persistence of dearth throughout the agricultural sector of the early Sung economy. Yet the agricultural record alone does not necessarily determine an economy's overall well-being. However fundamental it was to the workings of the Sung economy viewed either as a single coherent system or as the sum of its disparate regional parts, its harvest record was, by the eleventh century, just one, albeit crucial, benchmark of the economy's overall performance. To the patchy record of its agricultural sector must be added significant advances made in two other sectors, handicrafts and commerce, both of which had undergone a significant transformation since the eighth century in north and south China.

In the T'ang and earlier dynasties, a substantial portion of the handicrafts transported over long distances had been produced as luxury goods for either the government or the rich. Even as late as the Northern Sung this tradition remained strong enough to be unselfconsciously parodied by an anonymous listing of "top things in the empire."⁹² This list's desirables included, in addition to "the wives of the capital" and "the scholar-officials south of the Yangtze," a wide variety of luxury items that were dangled before the eyes of the male reader as ideal consumables: books printed and sold by the Imperial University (*T'ai-hsüeh*) in K'ai-feng, wine produced at the court distillery, ink-stones from Tuan-chou in Kuang-nan-tung, powdered tea from Chien-chou (Chien-ning fu) in Fu-chien, brocade from Szechwan, white-glazed porcelain (*pai-tz'u*) from Ting-chou (Chung-shan fu) in Ho-pei, paper from Su-chou in Liang-che-hsi, copper wares from Ho-tung, silk cloth from modern Shantung, saddles imported from the Liao, celadon imported from the Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392) in Korea, iced fish from Hsing-hua commandery in Fu-chien, and lychees from Fu-chou in Fu-chien. A century or two later, not only would such consumer dream goods be for sale in the major cities of south China, but also local imitations or regional versions of these empire-wide luxuries would be widely marketed in many prefectural seats and market towns of southeast China as affordable alternatives: for example, the celadon of Lung-ch'üan, the silk cloth of Chia-hsing, the paper of Hsüan-chou (Ning-kuo fu), the oranges of Tung-t'ing-shan, and the books printed in Chien-yang.

As this list shows, Sung prefectures and even counties became known for specialized products, their names being attached to goods in the way they had been affixed as choronyms to the great families of the T'ang dynasty. Food products commonly received this honor, enabling regional varieties of wine, teas,

⁹² T'ai-p'ing lao-jen, *Hsin-chung chin* (*T'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* ed.), p. 1.

oils, vinegars, sugar, fruits, dried fish, and even pickled vegetables to become celebrated brands in distant urban markets. More profit doubtless came from a flourishing trade in local handicrafts. Shao-hsing (Yüeh-chou) and Ch'ü-chou prefectures in Che-tung (Liang-che-tung) were famed for their porcelain, as were Te-hua (in Fu-chien) and Ching-te-chen (in Chiang-nan-hsi) in the Southern Sung. Ch'ang-sha (T'an-chou) in Ching-hu-nan produced quality silverware. Su-chou and Hu-chou in Liang-che-hsi and Wen-chou (Ju-an fu) in Liang-che-tung were celebrated for high-quality lacquerware. Chen-chou in Huai-nan-tung was known for its pewter and candlesticks, and Ch'üan-chou in Fu-chien for its cotton and wooden or tortoiseshell combs.

Some Sung merchants who facilitated and expanded the circulation of these and many other products engaged in long-distance trade between large cities; others made the rounds of rural markets and small towns as peddlers, agents, and traders. The regional networks they formed through the regularity of their exchange both deepened and widened the market's penetration of the rural economy, thereby drawing an increasing number of households into the production of goods for both regional and extra-regional distribution. Doubtless, this expansion of the commercial economy was shaped by the needs and practices of the Sung government. Its tax policies, its production of coins, its need to supply military garrisons along the northern borders and in the capitals, and its profitable monopolies over a few common goods like salt (that were produceable in just a few areas for a large market) assured the government of an important role in the circulation of goods. Yet the underlying impetus for this growth in production and commerce lay largely beyond the control of the emperor and officialdom. It can be found in the increased demands made by an unprecedentedly large population producing a larger economic surplus. These farmers, artisans, and merchants, in addition to producing far more regional specialties, were expanding the division of labor in their production processes. They were making more rational and thus profitable use of different types of soil. They were relying on more efficient means of boat transport for the distribution of their products throughout the empire. And they were establishing markets beyond the traditional confines of the county seat. Helping them make these achievements were a wide variety of technical innovations, some of them taking advantage of new, more efficient supplies of energy.

To analyze this series of changes and to assess their scale and economic significance, it is useful to see how the production of key commodities like textiles, ceramics, minerals, and coinage evolved over the course of the Sung along regional lines. Although official production quotas survive only for some minerals, much nonstatistical evidence in each of the Sung's three centuries points to an extensive expansion in the production of virtually all these goods and to their wider distribution to the population at large,

including rural households in some parts of the empire. What is striking about this commercial production is its great scale, its inclusion of even some items of daily use, its thriving in the agriculturally depressed northeast during the Northern Sung, and eventually its concentration in different circuits of the southeast during the Southern Sung.

Textile fabrics

In Sung times hemp and ramie were the fiber plants which provided the bulk of the population with the raw materials needed for their clothing. For up to three millennia, peasant households in China had commonly been growing these plants, spinning their strands into yarn, and then weaving this thread into cloth suitable for wear all year round. Both of these plants, depending on the weather, could provide three or four crops a year. Generally speaking, each found favor in different halves of the country. In the south, farmers understandably preferred ramie, as each of its crops yielded a fiber harvest two, three, or four times greater than a crop of hemp, for unlike hemp it was a perennial instead of an annual plant and because its plant's production did not decline for up to twenty successive years. In north China, however, such advantages mattered less to most farmers than did hemp's resistance to low winter temperatures, its use for oil and medicines, and the relative ease of removing fiber from its stems.

The empire-wide dependence on these two fiber plants, which lasted until the widespread planting of cotton in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, had been accompanied in north China by the practice of sericulture from at least the first millennium BC. As hemp and ramie plants could grow satisfactorily alongside mulberry trees, peasants commonly grew them all concurrently. The plants they grew for their own clothing and taxes; the early Southern Sung agronomist Ch'en Fu (b. 1076) urged farmers in Hu-chou in the uplands of the lower Yangtze delta to plant ramie and mulberry trees in alternating furrows, since the annual yield of three crops of ramie would pay the local land taxes of a small- or medium-income family.⁹³ In addition, the farmers kept mulberry trees to feed the silkworms that produced the thread so strongly desired by urban weavers and tax collectors alike. Anxious, then, to have a product so much in demand, many Northern Sung households – usually their women – in the Ho-pei, Ho-tung, and Ching-tung countryside grew mulberry trees, reared silkworms with the leaves of these trees, and spun thread from the silkworms' cocoons. Some peasant households proceeded to weave this thread into varieties of simple cloth of plain or coarse silk, and some perhaps even went on

⁹³ Ch'en Fu, *Nung-shu* (*Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* ed.) *hsia*, p. 21.

to dye, paint, or stitch designs into this woven cloth. But the weaving and decorative stages in this protracted process of production largely remained urban work, especially for the “loom households” (*chi-hu*) that were accomplished at achieving the complex weaves of gauze, satin, and tabby patterned in twill, tapestry, brocade, and damask that made Sung silk so famous throughout East Asia.

Silk production, like its urban centers for weaving, was unevenly distributed throughout the empire. Relatively little silk was made in its western half (but for the Ch'eng-tu region) and far southeastern circuits; that is, in the areas which provided most of the taxes the Sung government collected in hemp or ramie in c.1080. Thus, if regional tax payments in silk products roughly indicate actual regional differences in production levels, silk production in Sung times can be seen to have been centered in three regions – Ch'eng-tu, the lower Yangtze (including Liang-che and Chiang-nan-tung circuits), and the north China plain (the Ching-tung and Ho-pei circuits, and Ho-tung). Whereas the government's urban weaving establishments, themselves more numerous and more widely distributed than in earlier dynasties, tended to produce complex and expensive items for the court and officialdom, most silk production work at all stages was actually done by private parties, be they village households or urban workshops, for private purchase by consumers or households anxious to pay taxes in silk cloth. Furthermore, these private producers often drew on skills initially developed in the weaving of complex cloth varieties for the court, to create a remarkable range of specialized silk cloth and materials for their own regional markets. Ch'eng-tu-fu circuit, the provincial center with the largest government weaving establishment, was known for its brocades and damask; the lower Yangtze valley for its gauze, plain silk cloth, and pongee; and Ho-pei for its fine silk, silk tabby, brocades, and damask.

Scientific comparison of surviving examples of these silk fabrics with those from other dynasties has demonstrated that the quality of Chinese silk weaving peaked in the final decades of the Northern Sung.⁹⁴ Although this research does not designate the regional origin of these fine Sung silks, contemporary Sung observers commonly agreed that the best-quality silk fabrics came from the northern plain area, especially Ho-pei. In the 1130s a Ho-pei migrant to south China agreed, in judging the brocade of Ho-pei far better woven than Liang-che's and its gauze far more substantial than Su-chou's and Wu-chou's in Liang-che.⁹⁵ So widely shared was this appreciation of Ho-pei's silk that even the upstart Jurchen conquerors of north China knew the difference.

⁹⁴ Dieter Kuhn, *Textile technology: Spinning and reeling*, Part 9 of *Chemistry and chemical technology*, Volume 5 of *Science and civilisation in China*, ed. Joseph Needham (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 385–6.

⁹⁵ Chuang Ch'o, *Chi-lei pien shang*, pp. 19, 33.

When in 1126 they received southern gauzes and brocades as a surrender gift from the beleaguered Sung court, these proud warriors promptly rejected this "thin and weak silk" and demanded the Ho-pei varieties instead.

The quantity of silk production in the north China plain during the Northern Sung, however, is harder to estimate than is its quality. Reports on its supply of silkworms and mulberry leaf harvests are few and unhelpful. In 977, for example, swarms of black insects are said to have eaten up all the mulberry leaves in Tz'u-chou and in two counties of Hsing-chou (Hsin-te fu) in Ho-pei-hsi circuit,⁹⁶ yet no follow-up report indicates a drop in silk cloth production. Furthermore, the sole substantial group of figures that survives for silk goods, from c.1080, consists of regional tax quotas which of course need not indicate actual levels of production. Also, these figures, when broken down into the different types of silk fabric, tell us nothing of the relative value of different regions' versions of the same type of cloth.

If, however, we accept these limitations of our sources and do not dismiss the validity of silk tax figures as rough indicators of the geographical distribution of silk production levels, then in c.1080 the north China plain seems to have ranked highest in the empire in damask production, but only as second to the lower Yangtze area in gauze, plain silk, coarse silk (or crepe), and silk floss production. This second-best tax ranking, nonetheless, may well underestimate the actual level of north China's production of these kinds of silk fabric. First, a far higher share of the north China plain's prefectures and commanderies sent gauze silk, thirty-two kinds, as annual tribute to the court than did the prefectures and commanderies in either of the two other silk-producing regions; also, this north China total of forty-nine prefectures and commanderies, out of sixty-four in the entire region, was five more than in the late T'ang and accounted for over a fifth of all Sung prefectures and commanderies that presented silk goods as tribute to the court in c.1080. Second, in the year 1101 the annual silk goods tax quota of just Ching-tung-tung and Ching-tung-hsi circuits – that is, the north China region, but excluding Ho-tung and the two circuits of Ho-pei (Ho-pei-hsi and Ho-pei-tung) – stood at twice that of Liang-che's total annual tax quota for silk goods in 1074. Third, in the year 1010 Ho-pei alone was reported as annually providing the army with 700,000 bolts of silk. Fourth, such a high annual level of production in Ho-pei and subsequently in other circuits required far more weavers than would have been resident in just the urban centers; that is, the practice of silk weaving would have almost certainly been taken up by some northern villagers, even if they still wove cloth primarily for tax payments and an urban clientele. Fifth, the north China plain's surplus of silk thread, brocade, damask, and

⁹⁶ *SS* (1980) 67, p. 1475.

plain silk was enough in the latter half of the eleventh century to attract to the port of Mi-chou in Ching-tung-tung circuit merchants from all the coastal circuits of central and south China, including those of the lower Yangtze. And finally, by the late eleventh century, northern silk production was in all likelihood boosted by the widespread adoption of a treadle-operated silk frame that allowed one person to prepare silk cocoons and reel yarn simultaneously. This innovation (applicable also for spinning hemp and ramie yarn) reduced the labor needs for reeling, significantly cut their time and costs, and made greater use of rollers. In addition, it made a thicker and more twisted type of yarn, one that was highly suited for weaving the gauzes and satin cloth that north China had long been famous for producing.⁹⁷

Thus in the early Southern Sung one refugee to south China, perhaps out of an awareness of the disappointing grain harvests in Ho-pei and Ching-tung circuits in the late Northern Sung, made the statement that farming households in these circuits made more profits from sericulture than from agriculture.⁹⁸ Even if these northerners (in contrast to peasants in the upland counties of Hu-chou prefecture in the lower Yangtze delta) did not draw their entire income from sericulture, this claim underlines how dependent northern villagers were on sericulture for their income and how they turned to non-agricultural work to make up for the inadequacies of their grain harvests. Such sectoral imbalances, along with a heavy dependence on large infusions of southern coinage, left the northern economy vulnerable to twists of fortune (e.g. foreign invasion, dwindling deposits of minerals) just as damaging as the droughts of the Central Plain and the floods of the Yellow River. But the prosperity of the north's nonagricultural sector, evident not just in sericulture but also in ceramic and mineral production, provided some compensation for the persistent disappointments of its agricultural output.

Ceramics

During the Northern Sung ceramic production in north China manifested some strong continuities with T'ang practice. In both periods, northern potters made their wares principally by throwing them, and sometimes proceeded to decorate them with the aid of incised molds. Most of the sites of the main northern porcelain clay fields and kilns remained located in the eastern foothills of the T'ai-hang mountains of Ho-pei-hsi circuit, for Hsing ware in the T'ang and for Ting ware in the Sung. The kilns in these and other northern sites were usually the "*man-t'ou* type," small but efficient for long firings. Their pots' glazes were made from materials different from their pots'

⁹⁷ Kuhn, *Textile technology*, pp. 354 ff.

⁹⁸ Chuang, *Chi-lei pien shang*, p. 9.

bodies. And, although ceramic production required a considerable investment of capital, material, and labor (greater, for example, than needed for a private silk workshop in north China), the owners of these kilns and their adjacent workshops were often private families, single or joint, whose members at least sometimes worked as its managers and even artisans.

Yet it is the discontinuities, or advances, in the practice of ceramic production between the T'ang and the Sung that today most forcefully strike the historian or even the visitor to any respectable museum display of Chinese ceramics. As an excellent Western account of Chinese ceramic technology reminds us, the Sung was "a golden age for north Chinese stonewares and porcelains . . . [in] one of the greatest creative episodes in the history of world ceramics."⁹⁹ This claim of great aesthetic and technical advances is supported by a growing number of archaeological surveys. Over the past few decades, Chinese site reports have revealed dramatic changes in many aspects of ceramic production during the Northern Sung, ranging from the scale and level of production and the division of labor to the geographical distribution of the kilns and the market structure they supported.

Consider first the increase in the known ceramic production sites in operation during these dynasties. Of the 170 Chinese counties found by archaeologists between 1949 and 1986 to have had at least one premodern kiln, 130 had Sung kilns.¹⁰⁰ The textual record points in the same direction: in the first half of the T'ang, kilns numbered just twenty-three; by the end of the Sung they had tripled to more than seventy.¹⁰¹ Of these seventy-plus Sung sites, just six, located mainly in northeastern circuits, contained kilns known for producing ceramics for the court and officials. Yet since these same six kilns also produced some of their ware for the private market and since all the kilns in the other sixty-five or more ceramic production sites produced solely for the market, the Sung's expansion in ceramic production was predominantly for a private market.

Even more significant was a basic change in the character of Chinese ceramics. For the first time the ceramics made for daily use by the majority of northern Chinese residents was no longer relatively low-fired ceramics, or earthenware, but stoneware and porcelain ware. Since the sixth century, north China's revival of high-fired stoneware production had gradually expanded its market for these more expensive and durable types of pottery, a process that culminated in the eleventh century thanks to some basic improvements in ceramic

⁹⁹ Rose Kerr and Nigel Wood et al., *Ceramic technology*, Part 12 of *Chemistry and chemical technology*, Volume 5 of *Science and civilisation in China*, ed. Joseph Needham (Cambridge, 2004), p. 175.

¹⁰⁰ Feng Hsien-ming et al., comp., *Chung-kuo t'ao-tz'u shih* (Peking, 1987), pp. 228–30.

¹⁰¹ Otagi Matsuo, "Sōdai no bunka to tōji," in *Sekai tōji zenshū*, comp. Hasabe Gakuji et al. (Tōkyō, 1977), pp. 146–7.

manufacture and firing practices that would have greatly expanded production. Standardized forms, as in the growing preference for producing a few flat and open shapes of Ting ware, allowed for easier and safer stacking in firing and transport. Decorative molds were increasingly used for Ting ware, Yao ware, and Chün ware (which made use of double molds from perhaps as early as the start of the twelfth century), thereby hastening the speed of production. Kilns were made more compact, and more even conductors of heat. During these firings pots were stacked upside down in specially built staggers or in sidewall niches, so that heat would be more safely and evenly distributed. And, most importantly, coal replaced firewood as the principal fuel for firing kilns from the late tenth century. Usually located in seams above or below the clays used for porcelain and stoneware, coal secured slower, higher, and more controllable firings, resulting in far more substantial and efficient inputs of energy for ceramic production with northern clays. Taken together, these changes led to unprecedented levels of stoneware and porcelain ware production.

In the case of official porcelain wares like Ting, Yao, and Hsing, these changes do not appear to have led to a lowering of quality in at least the ware produced for the court. An improved process for preparing clay strengthened the ware's ceramic body. The placement of deeper ash pits beneath the kilns' firebars reduced the likelihood of the coal ash staining the glazes, and the bowls were sometimes silvered or gilded. Significantly, in the eyes of some Chinese and non-Chinese connoisseurs, the best-quality Ting ware was made in the early twelfth century, the very time when the trends favoring its mass production were stronger than ever. Indeed, one scholar has explained the early twelfth-century Sung court's shift of preference from Ting ware to Ju ware by pointing to the all too great popularity that Ting ware enjoyed in the populace at large: "By the turn of the century Ding [i.e. Ting] porcelains were so numerous and so popular that they could justly have been termed commonplace."¹⁰² One reason for their profusion, and perhaps for the court's shift of taste, was the great number of northern kilns producing credible imitations of this beautiful ware.

The significance of this Ting ware tale of a Northern Sung expansion in the production and consumption of high-fired porcelain and stoneware is enlarged by the success of Tz'u-chou ware in reaching and satisfying an even wider popular market. Produced first in Tz'u-chou prefecture in Ho-pei-hsi circuit in the tenth century, this white-bodied stoneware was made not for the court and government but for daily use at home and in the workplace of ordinary Chinese. Being inexpensive, handsome, and functional, it soon attracted many

¹⁰² Mary Ann Rogers, "The mechanics of change: The creation of a Song imperial ceramic style," in *New perspectives on the art of ceramics in China*, ed. George Kuwayama (Los Angeles, 1992), p. 68.

imitations produced at kilns throughout north China and as far west as present Ningsia. Once again, we unfortunately have no clear idea of these kilns' production levels. But much indirect evidence points to considerable expansion of their production from at least the mid-eleventh century. First, the geographical distribution of these kilns over a vast stretch of territory not integrated by river systems suggests that these kilns were often producing in response to the demands of local markets with little choice of rival versions of Tz'u-chou and Tz'u-chou-like ware. Second, saggars were introduced to the firing process in the eleventh century, and their increased use from c. 1100 made the firing more even and the production more reliable. Third, over the course of the Northern Sung, Tz'u-chou pots acquired an increasing variety of shapes, as if to fill a growing demand for all sorts of stoneware at the lower end of the market where the principal alternative would have been not another cheap variety of stoneware but just earthenware. And fourth, this increase in the choice of shapes was paralleled by a great enlargement in the types of Tz'u-chou decoration, an expansion that one English expert has described as "the most varied types of decoration technique ever seen in China": carving, incising, sgraffiato with one or two slips, slip painting, rouletting, polychrome lead glazing, overglaze polychrome enamelling, and glaze cutting with some moulding.¹⁰³ Such growing variety over the course of a century and a half of Sung rule in north China suggests a healthy demand, varied tastes, and expanding production.

These advances in northern wares attained a richness, complexity, and artistic quality that soon eclipsed the long-established ash-glazed stonewares of the south. Nonetheless, this technical and aesthetic success did not alter the fundamental fact that "northern stonewares and porcelains must have been expensive wares to fire, compared with equivalent wares made in the south."¹⁰⁴ The northern kilns, being smaller, devoted less of their space to pots than did the dragon kilns (*lung-yao*) of Fu-chien, and so they unproductively consumed much energy simply to heat themselves rather than the pots. In addition, longer firing times and more coal were required to avoid an uneven distribution of heat and underfiring of a kiln's load. Dust from burnt coal also could dirty and damage the glazes. And, since the northern kilns lacked the easy and cheap transport enjoyed by Ching-te-chen and other southern kilns, none of them could achieve in north China the same dominance in market share that Ching-te-chen would eventually achieve in the south. This marketing disadvantage, however, only hastened the spread throughout the north China plain of the technology and know-how necessary for the production of high-temperature stoneware and porcelain. Some production methods for sure

¹⁰³ Margaret Medley, *The Chinese potter: A practical history of Chinese ceramics* (New York, 1976), pp. 123–5.

¹⁰⁴ Kerr and Wood, *Ceramic technology*, p. 330.

remained the secret skills of certain artisan families and kilns. Yet, in contrast to later dynasties, high-quality porcelain pots were made in many competitive kilns of north and south China for both the court and the market.

Metals and coinage

Since metalworkers in the Northern Sung turned to coal to make their firing more efficient, there may well have been some transfer of know-how between ceramics production and metallurgical work. This claim is not pure speculation. The search for coal deposits was eased by their frequent presence directly above or below the clay used for northern stoneware or porcelain production. Important iron mines and smelters were located in the Ho-pei and Ching-tung circuits, particularly some of the northeastern prefectures noted for their ceramic production: Ting-chou, Tz'u-chou, Hsing-chou, and Hsiang-chou in Ho-pei-hsi circuit. And ceramic workers in these prefectures would have found the winter too cold for the throwing of pots and thus, like many Ho-pei farmers, would have used their free time to engage in mining, smelting, and other metallurgical work.

Under these favourable conditions, mining in the first century of Sung rule flourished, becoming what has been called "the second most important economic activity . . . after agriculture."¹⁰⁵ In the case of iron, modern historians have disagreed sharply about the level of production. But the lowest range of estimates, which recent Western research has wisely tended to support, would still put annual production levels several times higher than any corresponding figure in the T'ang (see Table 12).¹⁰⁶ This increase in actual iron production is particularly hard to estimate, largely because iron mining escaped Sung government controls more successfully than did the mining of other minerals. Chinese iron deposits tended to be small, shallow, and numerous, thereby encouraging relatively crude and inexpensive methods of extraction with the aid of cheap seasonal labour. Despite their concentration at this time in north China, they were widely scattered about the country. Hard to reach, they were even harder to tax, especially when government iron tax stations remained few and disparate and when iron forges tended to be located near the mines to reduce transportation costs. As a result, the arrangements described by Su

¹⁰⁵ Peter J. Golas, *Mining*, Part 13 of *Chemistry and chemical technology*, Volume 5 of *Science and civilisation in China*, ed. Joseph Needham (Cambridge, 1999), p. 1.

¹⁰⁶ Golas, *Mining*, p. 169, especially n. 494, expressing Donald Wagner's expert reservations about the reliability of the source used by Robert Hartwell to propose far higher figures for Northern Sung iron production in his "A revolution in the Chinese iron and coal industries during the Northern Sung, 960-1126," *Journal of Asian Studies* 21 No. 2 (February 1962), pp. 153-62. Such doubts were first raised in Yoshida Mitsukuni, *Chūgoku kagaku gijutsushi ronshū* (Tōkyō, 1972), pp. 364-9.

Table 12. *Mineral tax quotas (806–1165)*

	Gold <i>ounces</i>	Silver <i>ounces</i>	Copper <i>catties</i>	Iron <i>catties</i>	Lead <i>catties</i>	Tin <i>catties</i>	Mercury <i>ounces</i>
806–20	10,000	10,200	266,000	2,070,000	114,000	50,000	
847–59	–	25,200	655,000	532,000	793,000	17,000	
997	–	145,000	4,122,000	5,748,000	793,000	269,000	2,000
1021	14,000	883,000	2,675,000	6,293,000	447,000	291,000	2,200
1049–56	15,095	219,829	5,100,834	7,241,001	98,151	330,695	2,200
1064–7	5,439	315,213	6,970,834	8,241,001	2,098,151	1,330,695	–
1068–77	7,597	411,420	10,711,466	5,482,770	8,326,737	1,963,040	–
1078	10,710	215,385	14,605,969	5,501,097	9,197,335	3,213,622	3,356
1102–06	–	–	7,057,263	2,162,144	3,213,622	761,204	–
1162	–	–	263,169	880,302	191,249	20,458	–

Source: Ch'i Hsia, *Sung-tai ching-chi shih*, Volume 2 (Shanghai, 1988), pp. 571, 573.

Shih for privately owned iron forges in Hsü-chou in 1078 – thirty-six forges operated by their wealthy owners with the aid of 100-odd workers per forge – represent one, but exceptional, mode of operation.

With labor, mineral ores, and coal all in abundance during the Northern Sung, iron production could satisfy a strong demand for its products: iron tools for agriculture and handicraft production, iron armaments for the Sung's huge standing army (whose numbers peaked at 1,259,000 troops in the 1040s), and the government's own demands for iron coinage in Szechwan and eventually parts of the northern frontier area. Much of this production was achieved with relatively simple technology. But important technical advances in iron production were realized, most notably with the widespread adoption in the eleventh century of the direct decarbonization process – that is, the repeated forging of cast iron under cold blasts – for the making of steel.

Another mineral vital for the Northern Sung economy was copper. Its production was overwhelmingly for coinage, thus assuring that its mining and minting was of steady government interest (see Table 6). By 1083, in little more than a century of rule, nearly 300,000 tons of copper were mined and minted into 118 billion copper coins (i.e. an annual average of about a billion copper coins (*t'ung-ch'ien*), or about seventy copper coins per household per year according to the late eleventh-century census figures). These figures are conservative, since they omit some mines' copper production for some years as well as the many copper coins privately and thus illegally minted during this century. Nonetheless, they still indicate a tenfold increase over any copper production figure reported for any year in the last half of the Tang dynasty (i.e. 756–907).

This rise in Sung copper production was irregular, with large increases recorded in three periods: the close of the tenth century, with the introduction of annual mining and minting figures by the Sung; the mid-eleventh century, with a push to make up for a severe shortage of coinage; and the reform era of Wang An-shih, with a nearly threefold increase in the number of government copper coinage directorates from six to seventeen (it dropped to just four in 1084 when Wang's faction fell from power). Thus in 1078 three times more copper was reported as mined and smelted than in 997. In fact, in both 1073 and 1080 the government reported an annual minting of some 6 million new strings of copper cash, the highest such figure in all of Chinese history.

During this first century of Sung rule, but for the 1073–84 period, virtually all newly minted copper coins came from mines in south China, principally in the mountains of the middle Yangtze valley, in Jao-chou, Hsin-chou, and Chiang-chou in Chiang-nan-hsi; in T'an-chou in Ching-hu-nan; and, from its opening in 1048, in Shao-chou in Kuang-nan-tung. Once minted, at least two-thirds of these copper coins are estimated to have remained in private hands, either in circulation or hoarded. But the sheer volume of Sung coinage, the huge amount of pre-Sung coinage already in circulation, the great amount of tax levied in coins, and the scale of commercial trade evident in the c.1077 commercial tax figures and other reports, all indicate **the centrality of this coinage in private commercial transactions.** They also help to explain the **successful shift of portions of the northern economy out of a weakened agricultural sector into the thriving production and sale of silk, ceramics, metals, and other commodities.** The abundance of these coins, brought north by government boats to the capital, by private traders acquiring northern products, and by ordinary subjects anxious to make a small purchase, eased the circulation of these goods and thus made their production more likely and more profitable.

Marketing hierarchy and commercial activity

While we lack the sources and especially production statistics to link this industrial expansion in textiles, ceramics, and mining directly with the annual variations in regional harvest returns, Sung records about the distribution of these and other commercial products do include a unique set of empire-wide commercial tax quotas for each of the 2,060 customs stations operated by Sung personnel in c.1077. The locations of these sites ranged from the imperial capital and the circuit seats to the prefectural and county seats, and from market towns (*chen*) down to regular and periodic markets (*shih*, *tien*, *p'u*, etc.). This group of tax stations for small markets below the county-seat level lay largely beyond the stretch of government administration. Yet, at all customs stations, the commercial tax was levied according to a universally applicable

rate (2 percent *ad valorem* for the transit tax and 3 percent *ad valorem* for the market-transaction tax). Consequently, these c.1077 tax quota figures reveal the value and roughly the volume of trade that the government expected to pass through or be conducted at each of these tax station sites every year.

These commercial tax statistics point to five general conclusions about the level and distribution of eleventh-century trade.¹⁰⁷ First, as with the household figures for c.1080, south China's commercial tax quota in c.1077 outpaced north China's, accounting for 53 percent of the empire-wide quota. Slightly lower than its 59 percent share in a similar survey for 1061, this near-halving of the commercial tax burden between north and south China seems somewhat at odds with the south's flourishing commercial economy and its two-thirds share of the empire's population. Yet this apparent anomaly can be explained by recognizing a pattern of commercial activity that is roughly in line with the demographic ascendance of the lower and middle Yangtze regions. Szechwan's share of the commercial tax quota dropped from 22 percent in 1061 to 11 percent in c.1077, while during the same two decades the rest of south China, especially the middle and lower Yangtze valley, saw its commercial tax quota rise by 34 percent to account for one-third of the entire empire's in c.1077. Nonetheless, it is significant that during these same two decades the total quota of north China's commercial taxes also rose by 22 percent, particularly for Ching-tung-tung and Yung-hsing-chün circuits. While military provisions and needs may account for the rise in the last of these three circuits, they have little to do with the rise in the second and nothing to do with the rise in the first. In other words, the industrial and commercial economy of central and northeast China, as suggested by our survey of its sericulture, ceramic, and metal industries, was far more resilient than its agricultural economy.

Second, the quota for the capital, K'ai-feng, accounted for 7 percent of the empire-wide total and was more than three times greater than the next-ranked trading site, the city of Hang-chou. This imbalance was due to K'ai-feng's central role in the dynasty's political economy and in the empire's marketing hierarchy. In addition to being the enviable residence of over 10,000 officials, their families, and countless other government, military, and palace personnel, late eleventh-century K'ai-feng served as the depot for government reserves and official financing, drawing taxes, tribute, and especially grain trade for its nearly million residents from all quarters of the empire and beyond. To the north it had the Yellow River and the Wei river, to the east the Kuang-chi river, to the immediate southeast the Hui-min river, and then to the south

¹⁰⁷ The figures here derive from Shiba Yoshinobu, "Sōdai no toshika o kangaeru," *Tōbō gakuhō* 102 (July 2001), pp. 1–19, and thus revise some of the figures found in the important study by Kuo Cheng-chung, *Liang-Sung ch'eng-hsiang shang-p'in huo-p'i ching-chi k'ao-lüeh* (Peking, 1997).

the Pien river, the Grand Canal, and eventually the Yangtze river itself. Along this empire-wide network of waterways, particularly its northern and southern branches, were situated ten of the twenty Sung cities with the highest commercial tax quotas; seven of the other ten were located on arteries of these main waterways. And, last but not least, K'ai-feng benefited from lying at the heart of the metropolitan circuit, and thus having relatively easy access to the empire's most developed facilities for traffic, security, finance, and other transactions. The extent to which its position as imperial capital contributed to its commercial prosperity is suggested by the fate of the T'ang capital Ch'ang-an after a century of Sung rule. By c.1080 its population had fallen by four-fifths from its T'ang peak, and its commercial centrality had likewise been greatly reduced. Its commercial tax quota in 1077, even after a 45 percent increase since the 1060s, ranked sixteenth in the entire country and just fifth among the cities of north China.

The Sung's effort to maintain its capital's infrastructure certainly had its costs, such as deforestation in some surrounding areas and the court's destructive efforts to divert water from the Yellow River into the Pien Canal. Yet, compared with the T'ang's constant logistical and environmental problems in providing the daily necessities for the residents of Ch'ang-an, it must be counted a success. By the early twelfth century, most of K'ai-feng's nearly million population lived within an intramural area far more cramped than that of T'ang dynasty Ch'ang-an (the total perimeter of its outer walls, 11.26 kilometers, came to less than a third of that of Ch'ang-an). Many of its residents spilled out of the overcrowded city wards to form extensive suburbs beyond the city's gates.

Nothing better illustrates the transformation of the economic and social life of the Chinese capital than the handscroll painting *Ch'ing-ming shang-ho t'u* (*Going up the river during the spring festival*). Most scholars believe that this remarkably detailed example of urban genre art was painted by a certain Chang Tse-tuan (1085-1145) to describe daily life in the metropolis of K'ai-feng at the close of the Northern Sung. Regardless of whether this view is correct, this scroll provides us with an unrivaled visual account of Sung urban life. The Chinese painter may have brushed away the dust and dirt of this city's streets, but his idealized images betray nothing of the T'ang officials' notion of an official market and a proper urban order.

This scroll begins with a drawing of the rural landscape outside some city walls, thus enabling the viewer to follow the course of a canal, presumably the Pien Canal, as it approaches the suburbs and then the city. Coming close to a corner of the city's walls, the viewer sees the unloading of the grain from barges. Boats of various kinds are moored, awaiting their turn to pass under a large, arched bridge that spans the canal. On and around this celebrated

"Rainbow Bridge" countless open-air stalls sell their goods to pedestrians. Then, right after passing through a gate in the city walls, we observe one of the city's bustling streets. On both sides stand three-storey restaurants, as well as shops for incense, high-quality silks, medicine, pawnbroking, and so forth, all competing to lure the passers-by into their space. In addition, we see people of all social strata moving purposefully, from officials sitting in palanquins and wealthy women cloistered in sedan chairs to peddlers walking with animals and porters carrying their bags of burden. The prescriptions of the T'ang legal code (*T'ang-liü*) on the location and operation of official markets appear to have largely passed from the scene in the face of the dynamism of this Sung urban economy.

If Sung K'ai-feng, then, differed considerably from all previous imperial capitals, these differences were eventually reproduced in many other cities as well. For example, urban populations also overflowed into the suburbs in other large cities of the lower Yangtze delta and along the Grand Canal, as well as in remote provincial cities like Yüan-chou in Chiang-nan-hsi circuit, O-chou in Ching-hu-pei circuit, and Ch'üan-chou and T'ing-chou in Fu-chien circuit. In other words, this masterpiece of a handscroll unwittingly depicts urban scenes elsewhere in the empire that the painter would have never seen. It thus has a representative, if not fully realistic, character that is of great interest to anyone seeking to understand the workings of Sung cities.

Third, another 126 Sung cities were assigned a quota of 10,000 or more *kuan*, and together with K'ai-feng they accounted for 42 percent of the entire empire-wide quota. These 126 cities all were seats of prefectures or circuits, thereby suggesting a close correspondence between their high administrative and commercial ranks. The top twenty-seven of these seats, each levied for annual commercial tax payments of over 30,000 *kuan*, were expected to provide 15 percent of the empire-wide quota, and the remaining ninety-nine seats another 22 percent. Surprisingly, Huai-nan had three prefectural seats in the top-seven list and another nine in the next ninety-nine, with these sixteen seats expected to provide 358,590 *kuan* a year, but Liang-che and Ho-pei were the circuits with the greatest number of these tax stations and the highest quotas.

Historians have commonly grouped these cities and their prefectures according to their circuits and then declared certain regional differences in commercialization. This approach makes it clear that for some stations and even the entire southwestern circuit of Kuang-nan-hsi the commercial tax quota was minimal. It also indicates a regional pecking order at the top end that is not disputed: Liang-che, followed by Ho-pei-tung, Ching-tung-tung, Huai-nan-tung, Ching-hsi-pei, and Yung-hsing-chün. If we compare the aggregated taxes for small, middle, and large urban centers in the first two of these circuits, Liang-che and Ho-pei-tung, with their rank in the administrative hierarchy, the matrix shows a precise correspondence.

Yet a focus on natural as opposed to administrative geography reveals that the nine cities with the top commercial tax quotas were mainly prefectural seats located along the Grand Canal between Hang-chou and K'ai-feng (the cities of the Huai area are prominent) and cities along the lower reaches of the Yangtze river. The next eighteen cities in this ranking are largely centers of regional trading and transport networks situated along the coast or along the Yellow River and its tributaries in north China. The far south and west have very few representatives. Among the next ninety-nine sites one finds a wide variety of exchange sites. One revealing quota is that of Ting-chou in Ho-peihsi; it has the highest commercial tax quota among the prefectures known for their ceramic production.

Fourth, the county seat's economic position was under threat. Ever since the start of the imperial era, county seats had served as the centers not just of government administration but also of marketing. Throughout the Sung and indeed right up to the twentieth century they retained their administrative position and high social status in the eyes of officials and commoners alike, often attracting wealthy, nonproductive consumers to live within their walls. But from the late T'ang onwards they gradually lost their unrivalled hegemony in the local economy as natural centers for the collection and distribution of local products, including taxes. Their key nodal positions in local and long-distance transportation networks were in many cases yielded to other markets, particularly market towns.

These market towns had a variety of origins in the late T'ang, including inns, periodic markets at frequented river crossings, and garrison towns set up by the thirty or so military governorships then ruling much of provincial China. These military garrison towns in particular suffered considerable pressure from the early Sung government to close down. In 962 the Sung appointed county sheriffs (*hsien-wei*) to assume these garrisons' policing tasks, in 970 it banned local officials from appointing their relatives and bondservants to take command of these garrisons and other market towns, and by 1011 it was appointing civil as well as military officials to share the task of governing these ex-garrisons and other market towns under the supervision of the local county magistrate (*chih-hsien*).¹⁰⁸ In many prefectures, such as Hu-chou in Liang-che-hsi circuit, as many as three-quarters of their original market towns were eliminated within little more than a century of Sung rule. Over time the market towns in the counties of north China tended to be amalgamated, while those in south China often emerged near a county's borders in apparent disregard for patterns of population distribution within the county.

¹⁰⁸ T'an Yao, *Chia-tai Wu-hsing chih* (1201; Peking, 1990) 10, pp. 4730-1; and Fu Tsung-wen, *Sung-tai tsao-shih chen yan-chiu* (Fu-chou, 1989), pp. 81-3.

By 1084, nonetheless, 216 new market towns were recognized by the Sung government.¹⁰⁹ Although market towns were scattered throughout the empire, they were most numerous in north China and Szechwan. One government survey at this time listed 1,840 market towns for the entire empire and another mentions 20,606 sites for salt and wine tax collection. While these two figures do not encompass all the known trading sites and marketing areas, they indicate, when added together and then divided by the 1,265 county seats operating in 1102, a minimal average of twenty marketing sites, ranging from towns to periodic markets, for each late Northern Sung county. The change from the early Tang's concentration of all trade in just one market in the sole seat of county government could not be more glaring.

A comparison of these market towns' and county seats' commercial tax quotas points to a qualitative change in their relative economic position and function by c.1077. In more than half of the Sung's circuits, the total commercial tax quota and presumably the level of commercial activity were lower for the county seats than for the same county's towns, markets and lesser marketing sites. In some areas of the empire, county seats paid no commercial tax at all; instead, the largest tax quota in these counties was shouldered by their market towns or even markets. And since we tend to know more about the quotas for county seats than for marketing sites, the level and value of commercial activity in these sub-county trading areas can be safely assumed to have been higher than what is suggested by the c.1077 figures alone.

Fifth, the escape of commerce from the confines of the county seat, it can be argued, acquired its greatest historical significance from the penetration of the countryside by travelling merchants. From the latter half of the T'ang dynasty, poets and even painters set out to depict with fresh curiosity rural marketplaces and small towns in south China. At roughly the same time, north and central China experienced a proliferation of settlements with commercial facilities that began to attract the attention of officials. The nomenclature for these settlements varied from region to region. In north China, the most commonly used terms were *tien* (shop/hostel) and *shih* (marketplace), while in the southernmost regions of China *hsü-shih* was the term of preference, along with *hui* (gathering), *p'u* (store), and *shih*. Marketing settlements in central China, such as in the Yangtze valley, made use of both these northern and southern expressions. But whatever term was used, these rural marketplaces and small market towns were usually provided with one or more hostels, which ran inns, warehouses, parking facilities, and restaurants for the convenience of travelling merchants.

¹⁰⁹ Fu, *Sung-tai tsao-shih chen yan-chiu*, p. 91.

In sum, the doubling of the Chinese population from the mid-eighth century to the late eleventh century took place overwhelmingly in south China, primarily in the lower and middle Yangtze valley. The resulting shift in the demographic and economic center of China from the northern Central Plain to the southeastern quarter of the country was the culmination of many centuries of efforts by farmers, landowners, and government to realize the great potential of south China's lowlands and uplands for settled rice cultivation. This transformation of the landscape can be readily attributed to the south's widespread practice of private landownership, the introduction there of some new farm tools, the quick spread of new drought-resistant varieties of Champa rice seeds, and consequently the expansion of arable land up mountain slopes and down into lowland marshes in south China. Yet also crucial for the overall expansion of the south's economy were advances made in its silk production, in its mining and metal industries, and in its commercial organization, particularly in its southeastern quarter.

North China's economy was neither as vibrant nor as balanced. Its agricultural production was constantly hampered by military threats along the northern border, ongoing deterioration of the natural environment, and serious droughts and floods. Its nonagricultural production, as seen in the mining and ceramic sectors, made great advances, enabling the north's overall economy to commercialize far more than its agricultural sector alone would have tolerated. Yet the circulation of these nonagricultural products relied on the support given to marketing networks by regular government deliveries to frontier troops as well as on a ready supply of newly minted copper coins. Even if the Sung government needed to continue making these deliveries, the ongoing provision of these coins to the northern economy was far less certain. Not only were they most commonly mined and minted in the south, but also the copper deposits there were limited. When either the trading networks weakened or the supply of coinage declined – as would happen in the twelfth century – north China's commercial development would retreat at the expense of both industry and agriculture. Thus its imbalanced development limited the options open to its residents during any crisis and also made its overall economy vulnerable to external pressures, like war and drought, that lay beyond its control.

MIDDLE SUNG (1080–1162)

Population growth and harvest returns, 1080–1126

At first sight the second century of Sung rule, as represented by its first five decades of census figures and harvest results, appears far less eventful than

its first century. Overall population growth from c.1080 was about 5 percent, with about 18 million households registered for south China in 1162 and for north China in 1187. Although there was no sharp change to the population share between the north and the south, the north's population continued to grow less than the south's. It also was increasingly concentrated in the vicinity of the capital, K'ai-feng, in the area of modern Shantung province (a rise of c.15 percent), and in the Shansi area (a rise of over 50 percent). Meanwhile, the rest of the north, especially the general Yung-hsing-chün area, suffered a sizable drop in population.

For south China as a whole, the registered population between c.1080 and 1162 rose by 12 percent, to 11,622,625 households. Virtually all these households lived south of the Yangtze river, and over half of them in the southeastern circuits that had since the eighth century become so economically important: Liang-che-hsi, Liang-che-tung, Fu-chien, Chiang-nan-hsi, and Chiang-nan-tung (despite this last circuit's loss of 10 percent of its c.1080 household figure by 1162). The south's population continued to be settled largely in its wealthier circuits, with Ch'eng-tu-fu attaining the highest population density with twenty households per square kilometer. Yet, it was the more backward circuits that in the south often recorded the higher percentage increases in their household number. These rises varied from a minimal 19 percent in Ching-hu-nan to a moderate 23 percent in Liang-che and then on to a considerable 39 percent in Chiang-nan-hsi, and 40 percent in Fu-chien and Ch'eng-tu-fu. Far higher percentage rises, however, were recorded in less developed circuits, such as T'ung-ch'üan (68 percent) and distant Kuang-nan-hsi (102 percent).

This rough statistical description of slower population change and distribution in the mid-twelfth century suggests that a long period of population growth and overall economic expansion may have largely come to an end by the 1160s. Such a reading, we shall see, holds some truth. But these figures are deceptive in that the slowdown they reflect was due, primarily, to great political, demographic, and economic changes that resulted from the fall of north China into foreign hands in 1126. In the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries few men of Sung thought that such a disaster was imminent. Outside the faction-ridden world of the court, their main concern continued to be the empire's disappointing harvest results. The first four and a half decades of the second Sung century, coming in the wake of the disasters of the 1070s, would see only an incomplete recovery in the agricultural economy of north China and little improvement in that of the Yangtze valley. Ho-pei suffered food shortages for at least four years in the 1080s (1082, 1084, 1086, 1087) and three years in the 1090s (1094, 1096, 1099), but also enjoyed some good harvests in four years of the 1080s and twice in the

1090s.¹¹⁰ Ho-tung's record was patchy, showing fewer shortages (1082, 1084, and 1000) but only a few recorded bumper crops (1076-8, 1083, 1094).¹¹¹ Yung-hsing-chün's record was even sparser, with bumper crops reported for 1083 and 1092 and shortages for 1081, 1086, and early 1100.¹¹²

In the first two decades of the twelfth century the harvest performance of three of these circuits seems to have improved. The historical sources tell of good harvests in north China from the year 1111 to 1113 and from 1119 to 1121, suggesting more secure and perhaps higher production levels than in the late eleventh century.¹¹³ For instance, Ho-pei enjoyed fine harvests in 1111, 1119, and 1120, only to suffer famines from wars and natural disasters from 1123 to 1126. But, even if we know too little about the harvests in these circuits in the opening decade of this century, it is clear that north China did not suffer famine then or at any time between 1080 and 1126 on the same deadly scale as in 1074-5.

Such destructive harvest failures, however, did hit the Yangtze delta in two stretches, between 1089 and 1094 and between 1115 and 1120. Floods in the winter of 1088 and the spring of 1089 prevented the planting of an early rice crop throughout Liang-che-hsi in 1089; an unexpected drought later in 1089 aborted the transplanted late rice crop as well. "With the high and low [fields] together damaged, eating has been harder this year than in any other."¹¹⁴ The summer of 1089 brought also an epidemic to a region that had reportedly suffered a great population loss about fifteen years earlier, leaving its cities greatly emptied and its people heavily in debt or far behind in their tax payments.¹¹⁵ Over the next twelve months a *ton* of rice never cost less than sixty or seventy cash.¹¹⁶ The years 1090 and 1091 brought little improvement, as the delta's old problem of flooding returned with a vengeance. Su-chou, Hu-chou, and Hsiu-chou (Chia-hsing fu) are said to have lost half of their population. These reports undoubtedly exaggerate the rate of death, but it was not only descriptions of corpses floating in creeks and canals that told of grave population loss: "The elders all say that they have never seen or heard of this situation before. The floating of corpses is worse than in the Hsi-ning reign era (1068-77)."¹¹⁷ A million bushels of grain and 200,000 strings of cash were sent as relief in mid-1091, but in early 1093 Liang-che-hsi

¹¹⁰ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 57, pp. 10a, 10b, 11b, 13a; Satō, *Chūgoku saigaishi nenpyō*, p. 129; and Tseng and Liu, eds., *Ch'üan Sung wen*, Volume 46, p. 348.

¹¹¹ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 39, pp. 33b, 37b; SS (1980) 67, p. 1463; and Satō, *Chūgoku saigaishi nenpyō*, p. 129.

¹¹² Satō, *Chūgoku saigaishi nenpyō*, pp. 126, 129; and SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 57, p. 12b.

¹¹³ SHY (1965) *shih-huo*, 40, pp. 3b, 4a, 7b, 8a, 8b; 41, p. 23b; and 53, p. 18a.

¹¹⁴ HCP (1979) 435, p. 10494. ¹¹⁵ HCP (1979) 435, p. 10494.

¹¹⁶ Ch'üan, "Pei-Sung wu-chia te pien-tung," p. 62.

¹¹⁷ HCP (1979) 435, p. 10480; 461, p. 11028; and Wang Ling, *Wang Ling chi*, ed. Shen Wen-cho (Shanghai, 1980) 20, p. 344.

suffered another disaster requiring the import of grain from Huai-nan, Chiang-nan-hsi, and elsewhere.¹¹⁸ The year 1094 brought further reports of food shortages.

The lower Yangtze delta food shortages reported in 1097, in the years between 1102 and 1105, and in 1109 and 1113 were less damaging,¹¹⁹ but that of 1115–16 seemed to presage a return to past problems. Floods in the winter of 1115 greatly damaged rice crops in Ch'ang-chou, Hsiu-chou, Hu-chou, Hang-chou, and Su-chou.¹²⁰ By mid-1116 no rice had yet appeared in the markets of Hang-chou prefecture, and 430,000 persons in twenty-five counties of Liang-che-hsi required government grain relief.¹²¹ In the fall, floods again damaged crops and drove up rice prices.¹²² Cheap rice might have been imported from neighbouring circuits blessed this year with bumper crops, but officials there feared future shortages and banned the export of their surplus.¹²³ Flooding inundated Liang-che-hsi's fields and did damage to the crop in 1118 (120,700 bushels were need for relief by the start of the following year), 1119, 1120, and 1124.¹²⁴ The Northern Sung would end in the delta with two successive years of bumper crops,¹²⁵ but an 1126 official review of the circuit's performance as a taxpayer during the previous two to three decades captures well its poor performance as a rice producer: never had it submitted more than 40 percent of its annual grain tax to the capital.¹²⁶ It is no wonder that a mid-twelfth-century migrant to the backwaters of rural Hang-chou would utter that he had come expecting "Heaven on Earth" but had experienced little but poverty and hardship.¹²⁷

Nonetheless, it is notable that once again Liang-che's poor harvest record only occasionally meant serious food shortages or extensive famines. Not only did some of these poor harvests fail to halt its export of hundreds of thousands of bushels of rice as taxes to the capital and as grain relief to needy circuits elsewhere in south China, but also Liang-che rarely needed to rely on rice imports even after the direst of these harvests. After the opening months of 1093, years with extensive death and rice shortage were few and famines rare (during the final decades of the Northern Sung, mainly in 1116 and from 1119 to early

¹¹⁸ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 57, p. 11a.

¹¹⁹ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 57, pp. 12b, 13a, 13b, 14a; 59, p. 8b; Ch'üan, "Pei-Sung wu-chia te pien-tung," p. 72; and Satō, *Chūgoku saigaishi nenpyō*, p. 130.

¹²⁰ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 57, p. 14a. ¹²¹ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 57, p. 14a.

¹²² SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 57, p. 14b; 59, p. 10a. ¹²³ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 59, p. 10a.

¹²⁴ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 57, pp. 15b, 16b; 59, pp. 11a, 11b; and Ch'üan, "Pei-Sung wu-chia te pien-tung," p. 72.

¹²⁵ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 40, pp. 11a, 11b.

¹²⁶ Wang Ying-ch'en, *Wen-ting chi* (*Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen* ed.) 21, p. 4a.

¹²⁷ Yüan, *Feng-ch'uang hsiao-tu* (*T'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* ed.) *shang*, p. 6.

1120¹²⁸). Residents of the delta were alarmed more by the depredations they suffered from special court emissaries and local rebellions than by troubles along a distant border.

A dynastic crisis

Yet it was troubles along the distant northern border that would permanently alter the dynasty's fate and bring great and lasting changes to its northern and southern economies. The rest of this section will discuss these changes and how they affected the development of both the northern and southern economies during the second and third quarters of the twelfth century.

In 1126 north China fell into the hands of the Jurchen. This semi-nomadic people of northeast Asian origin had recently allied with the Sung to overthrow the Liao dynasty. Emboldened by their virtually single-handed success in bringing down this two-centuries-old kingdom that had been the Sung's principal nemesis in East Asia, the Jurchen soon set their eyes on the treasures of the Middle Kingdom itself. At the end of 1125 their hardened troops and swift cavalry broke through the Sung border defenses in Ho-pei and Ho-tung circuits, and then in 1126 proceeded to capture major cities across north China, including the capital, K'ai-feng. In 1127, having imposed an unconditional surrender on the Sung, they pushed westward into Yung-hsing-chün and eastern Szechwan, and then in 1129 rushed southward across the Huai and Yangtze rivers. Their southern foray lasted just a few months, but their occupation of the north began a century and a half of China's division into rival dynasties, one Chinese in the south and others foreign in the north.

Having been forced to flee south of the Yangtze, the remnants of the Northern Sung court suffered an irreparable loss of political legitimacy. Known in later writings as the Southern Sung dynasty, this displaced dynasty repeatedly failed to regain the northern homeland of Chinese civilization. It lacked the concerted will and confidence to attempt this northern expedition, partly because it had surrendered to the Jurchen so much of the necessary wealth and resources. It lost a third of its territory, nearly half of its 320-odd prefectures, two-fifths of its households, over half of its summer land tax, over three-fifths of its fall land tax, nearly half of its commercial tax, and most of its valuable metals. It lost virtually all of the northern iron mines hitherto essential for its arms manufacture and most of its mines for gold (centered in Lai-chou in Ching-tung-hsi and Teng-chou in Ching-hsi-nan circuits), mercury (in the

¹²⁸ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 57, pp. 14a, 15a, 15b; 59, pp. 10a, 14b; and Ch'üan, "Pei-Sung wu-chia te pien-tung," p. 81.

northwest, in Ch'in-feng and Yung-hsing-chün circuits), and lead (mainly in parts of Ho-pei-hsi and Yung-hsing-chün circuits).

Very soon, damage from the Jurchen conquest and rule became evident in the economy of north and especially northeast China. North of the Yellow River, the Jurchen troops widely pillaged cities and villages, driving many artisans and peasants into permanent flight. South of the lower reaches of the Yellow River, the countryside in the Ching-tung circuits suffered repeated floods. In 1128 retreating Sung forces deliberately broke the Yellow River dikes, intending to thwart the advance of the Jurchen cavalry but actually devastating much of the countryside in the path of its new course through Ho-nan and the Huai river valley. The course of the Yellow River was so disrupted that over the next century it flooded no fewer than twenty-one times. Consequently, the practice of mulberry tree growing and sericulture, for which this area had long been celebrated, fell into disarray, never to regain its earlier heights.

Even greater damage was inflicted a hundred miles farther south, in the Huai river valley, where a once prosperous region was transformed into an embattled borderland. Almost overnight, villages with fertile fields were abandoned to become vast stretches of wasteland, home mainly to soldiers and their garrisons from both the Chin-controlled north and the Southern Sung-controlled south. For most of the next century and a half a tense truce prevailed along this border, and the devastation from the Jurchen invasion remained widespread forty years later:

Those of its markets said to be rich and prosperous are in just one or two prefectural seats which generally are like a small or low-rank county seat in the Chiang-Che area [Chiang-nan and Liang-che]. Its county seats reach such desolation that they have only forty to fifty families and generally are like a very small settlement in the Chiang-Che area.

By 1162 the registered population of the Huai-nan circuits was a mere fifth of its peak level in the peaceful days of 1101.

In the Yangtze valley the destruction from the Jurchen invasion was extensive. Initially, the most obvious sign of the Jurchen forces' incursion into south China was their destruction of life and buildings in the cities of the Yangtze valley. In their advance to prefectural seats as far south as Ming-chou (present Ningbo) in Liang-che-tung, T'ai-ho county in Chiang-nan-hsi, and Ch'ang-sha (T'an-chou) in Ching-hu-nan, they concentrated on the seizure of large cities. These they plundered and razed with a savagery that far surpassed the rampages of peasant rebels in the same areas during the early 1120s. Thus, when the Jurchen made a scrappy retreat across the Yangtze in the summer of 1130, they left behind scores of brutally charred cities virtually empty of human settlement.

Recovery

Yet, in contrast to north China, the Yangtze valley and its economy soon recovered. By the mid-twelfth century its population figures show a return to formerly high levels, thanks to the arrival of millions of northern immigrants. Its grain harvests, against all predictions, attained a stability and reliability not achieved in the Northern Sung. Its specialized products grew in number, as did the demand for them. And its trading network, after the loss of the Pien river and most of the Huai river portions of the Grand Canal, was rebuilt with a focus on southern river and sea routes. With all these sectoral improvements, south China, particularly its southeastern quarter, capped a centuries-long process whereby it achieved demographic, economic, and cultural dominance over the rest of China that has arguably lasted up to our time.¹²⁹

In the wake of the Jurchen's brutal destruction of human life and urban wealth came one of the great mass migrations of Chinese history. Millions of northerners sought safety south of the Yangtze, having taken to the road with the rest of their village or their family, or simply alone. The scale of this mass migration can at present only be estimated. One suggestive clue is the nearly 1.4 million household decline in the census figures of the most affected areas of north and central China between c.1080 and 1162. This drop, even when allowing that many of these would have died in the mayhem of flight, conceivably yields a total of 5 million refugees; that is, no less than a seventh of all of north China's population in c.1080. Since this figure excludes refugees from other areas of the north, the actual figure was most likely far higher.

South of the Yangtze, the survivors of this headlong rush to the south resettled virtually everywhere, some fleeing as far south as the eastern half of Kuang-nan-hsi and the coastal prefectures of Kuang-nan-tung. By far the most popular destinations, particularly for the rich and the powerful, were the wealthy prefectures of Liang-che-hsi and Liang-che-tung, including the newly designated capital city, Hang-chou. There these migrants struggled to acquire residences, landholdings, and official appointments with attractive salaries. Very few of them and their descendants returned to live in north China or even to visit their ancestral graves. Even though some officials would regularly call for the recapture of the north, most descendants of these refugees would seem to have adapted to the softer ways of the south and to have gradually forgotten their northern homeland.

¹²⁹ Wu Sung-ti, *Liao Sung Chin Yüan shih-ch'i*, in the series *Chung-kuo jen-k'ou shih*, ed. Ko Ch'ien-yung (Shanghai, 2000), Volume 3; and Chang Chia-chü, *Liang-Sung ching-chi chung-hsin te nan-i* (Wu-han, 1957).

Harvest results, 1127-70

For most of the first four decades of the Southern Sung, south China, especially the lower Yangtze delta, recorded fine harvests. The expansion of its agricultural surplus, especially since its tax grain was sent to Hang-chou rather than to K'ai-feng, allowed for considerable inter-regional trade in rice and other grains. This improvement was first evident in the lower Yangtze delta, where the Jurchen invasion proved less disruptive to the delta's villages and their grain harvests than to its cities and their government offices. Bumper harvests were reported in the delta for every year from 1126 through 1133, except for 1128, a poor harvest blighted by drought, and 1130, a harvest virtually lost to the Jurchen invasion. The next four years brought so few troubles that in the twelve chaotic years of 1126 through 1137 Liang-che-hsi enjoyed twice as many bumper harvests as it had in the relatively peaceful quarter of a century from 1101 to 1124.

It took roughly a decade before other parts of south China experienced such a surprising reversal of harvest returns, yet the improvements did come. The Jurchen cavalry had depopulated and devastated the circuits north of the Yangtze as well as many prefectures several hundred miles south of it. Shortly after their retreat from south China in 1131, the harvest prospects along the Yangtze were at first mixed: "For a series of years cultivation had been neglected, and there had been floods and droughts. This year (1132) saw a bumper crop in various prefectures along the Yangtze." Then the next three years saw repeated famine in Chiang-nan-hsi. In 1133 the cause was drought, in 1134 floods damaged crops in nine prefectures and commanderies and thirty-seven counties, and in 1135 drought again inflicted a great harvest loss and eventually famine, with many poor people fleeing for their lives and turning to brigandry. Particularly hard hit in 1135 was Szechwan, with harvest returns no more than half the normal. Soaring rice prices, widespread flight, epidemic outbreaks, and mass death from illness and starvation followed one another in a seemingly irreversible downturn.

During these years some circuits farther south reported similarly depressing harvests. In Fu-chien, for instance, peasant troubles and uprisings in the mid-1120s inflicted widespread destruction. In 1129 they led to a great loss of life in the four interior prefectures, whose fields ended up reverting to wasteland. In early 1132, owing to a poor harvest the previous year, the army in Fu-chien ran short of food supplies, and the civilians also found it increasingly hard to eat. The solution, to import tens of thousands of bushels from Kuangnan, worked in 1132 and 1136, but not in 1135, when, as in the Yangtze valley, drought and famine proved very disruptive all along the southeast

coast.¹³⁰ In this year and the next, Kuang-nan-hsi, particularly in the coastal areas that had often supplied grain relief in past famines elsewhere, suffered great food shortages and death from starvation.

It is against this varied but overall depressing early Southern Sung record that the next few decades would see a remarkable reversal of south China's harvest performance, resulting not only in overall population growth by 1162 but also in considerable grain surplus for merchants to trade. "After 1135," wrote an official in Ching-hu-nan, "for forty years the rich and poor in Ch'ang-sha were fine. A *tau* of rice sold for just two or three cash."¹³¹ Its prefecture of T'an-chou reportedly had thirty-eight years of good harvests before suffering its next serious harvest failure.¹³² Elsewhere in Ching-hu-nan harvest results were less regular, but particularly bumper harvests were reported from the circuit in 1141, 1142, 1158, c.1161, 1170, and 1171.¹³³ Chiang-nan-hsi's record is much sparser even for famines; a bumper crop was reported for Chiang-che in 1162.¹³⁴ In four interior prefectures of Kuang-nan-hsi, rice surpluses existed even in relatively poor harvest years so that rice remained cheap, no more than sixty cash per *tau* and usually much cheaper.¹³⁵ And in Liang-che-hsi, where the 1135 drought had caused only slight harvest damage,¹³⁶ bumper crops and cheap grain were regularly reported (e.g. 1132, 1143, and 1162).¹³⁷ Its northeastern corner had enjoyed good harvest returns from an even earlier date: thanks to dredging undertaken c.1119, "the fields of K'un-shan [county] had no hunger for [the next] thirty years." In 1158 floods in Su-chou, Hsiu-chou, and Hu-chou indicated the need for further dredging, as peasants fled and ordinary people in Liang-che found it hard to eat during the fall of that year.¹³⁸ But, come the following spring, another crop of grain and silkworms assured that the people "could continue to eat." Moreover, such harvest troubles occurred far less frequently in the Yangtze delta than in the previous century, allowing commentators in the late twelfth century to pair Su-chou with Hu-chou (or Ch'ang-chou) as the two prefectures whose rice production could feed the entire empire. Perhaps only in Fu-chien were favorable harvest

¹³⁰ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 57, pp. 17a–19a; 59, pp. 26a–28a; and Ho Ch'iao-yüan, ed., *Min-shu* (Fu-chou, 1994–5), Volume 5, 148, p. 4383.

¹³¹ Wang Chüan, *I-feng chi* (*Ssu-k'ü ch'üan-shu chen-pen* ed.) 1, p. 3b.

¹³² Wang, *I-feng chi* 1, p. 3b; and SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 58, p. 11b.

¹³³ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 40, pp. 24a, 24b, 29b, 52a; Lu Yu, *Ju Shu chi* (*Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* ed.) 5, p. 45; and Wang, *Chin-ni yü-bsieh tsung-k'ao*, pp. 269, 272, and 273.

¹³⁴ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 40, p. 34b.

¹³⁵ Wang, *Chin-ni yü-bsieh tsung-k'ao*, p. 268.

¹³⁶ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 40, pp. 20b–21a. ¹³⁷ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 40, pp. 15a–b, 23a, 30b.

¹³⁸ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 59, pp. 34a, 35a; 41, p. 30b; and Yao Wen-hao et al., eds., *Che-hsi shui-li shu chiao-chu* (Peking, 1984), pp. 35, 39.

reports, as in 1157, few;¹³⁹ severe droughts struck parts of it in 1145 and 1148.¹⁴⁰

Land expansion: lowlands

One reason for the overall improvement in grain supplies probably was the simple fact that south China no longer had to feed millions of people in north China. All, or virtually all, of its grain production could now be used to feed its own residents. Another reason was the emergence of improved strains of Champa rice. During the twelfth century, as this seed variety's growing time was cut to as short as sixty days, it became popular in lowland areas as well, particularly when its growing season could be followed by that of a second crop of rice or wheat. By 1137, 70 percent of the Hung-chou (Lung-hsing fu) fields in Chiang-nan-hsi were planted with early-ripening Champa (and just 20–30 percent with late-ripening).¹⁴¹ Later on in the twelfth century, that figure for paddy fields in both Chiang-nan-hsi and Chiang-nan-tung rose to 80–90 percent.¹⁴² In the lake areas and rocky coastal fields of Liang-che-tung, it proved popular as a middle-ripening variety. But farther south in the littoral and mountainous areas of Fu-chien, as well as in the paddies of Kuang-nan-tung and Kuang-nan-hsi, its more quickly growing varieties were rapidly adopted by farmers (eventually, we shall see, they double-cropped it).¹⁴³

Yet in the lower Yangtze valley probably the most productive change in agricultural practice, successful reclamation of low-lying land, was in part the consequence of government policy reversals dating from the early twelfth century. Disturbed by a serious decline in its land tax revenue in the delta, the government changed the aim of its delta irrigation policy from easing water flow to promoting land expansion through polder construction. This shift, first evident from 1116 to 1120, led to the rapid reclamation of some lakes and the reopening of some river outlets. Although the government subsequently, between 1158 and 1184, once again reversed its stance and issued six bans on lake-bottom reclamation and ordered the restoration of some lakes and dams (other bans would come in 1189, 1196, 1201, 1210, 1215, 1223, and 1253¹⁴⁴), it rarely had the power to enforce them. Also, when confronted with

¹³⁹ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 70, p. 47a.

¹⁴⁰ Ch'en Shou-ch'i et al., *Fu-chien t'ung-chih* (1829; 1868–71 ed.) 271, p. 7a; and SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 57, p. 19b.

¹⁴¹ Tseng Yung-cheng, "Sung-tai Chiang-hsi tao-pin ch'ung te pien-hua," *Chung-kuo nung-shih* 3 (1989), p. 49.

¹⁴² Lu, *Lu Chiu-yüan chi*, 16, p. 205; and Wu Yung, *Ho-lin chi* (Ssu-k'ü ch'üan-shu chen-pen ed.), 39, pp. 6b–8a.

¹⁴³ Sudō, *Sōdai keizai shi kenkyū*, pp. 154–6.

¹⁴⁴ Sudō, "Sōdai no ūten," pp. 350, 366–7.

hundreds of thousands of Huai-nan war refugees seeking food in the delta in 1206, it backed down again and allowed owners of illegally developed polders to have these migrants tenant and cultivate their land.

These repeated shifts in government policy, leading eventually to a toleration of new polders, reflect significant political and agricultural changes from the eleventh century. The culprits now included not just the "eminent big surnames" of the T'ai-ho countryside, but also many powerful northern migrants, such as generals, army troops, high officials, monks and their temples, and members of the imperial clan (*tsung-shih*).¹⁴⁵ Their political links and the protection they lent to the ranks of the local "households of influence" (who in fact often commended their enclosures to them) repeatedly undermined the bans against lake-bottom reclamation.

The twelfth century (as well as the thirteenth) also saw a more intense pace and greater scale in Liang-che-hsi's land reclamation, even if this change was not as comprehensive and as extensive as some scholars once believed. Whereas the focus in the eleventh century had usually been on shallow dams and reservoirs, the landgrabbers now had their eyes, and hands, on the delta's numerous lakes and rivers. In the eastern delta, as Hamashima Atsutoshi has noted, the focus was on the extension of arable land,¹⁴⁶ whereas in the delta's core counties closer to Lake T'ai the continuing construction and drainage of polders took place along with a further intensification of farming. The boom in land reclamation during the second decade of the twelfth century saw the partial enclosure of 2 million *mu* in Su-chou and 1.5 million *mu* of Lake Fu-yung in Wu-hsi county in Ch'ang-chou, along with the complete reclamation of Lake Shang in Ch'ang-shu county of Su-chou and Lake Mao in Hua-t'ing county. The opening decades of the Southern Sung saw this trend continue at such a pace that in 1184 the government posted in 1,489 places its ban on further polder construction.

By the close of the twelfth century, polder construction was being blamed for, as we shall see, a string of bad harvests. In much of the delta the main problem for rice agriculture was no longer, as it had been in the Northern Sung, floods. It was drought, and polders were seen as the cause. New polders tended to redirect streams away from their previous routes, thus depriving some field owners of water they had come to take for granted. Also, large polders enclosed not just fields but also ponds and other water supplies, and use of these irrigation facilities tended to be restricted solely to the owners of a polder's paddy

¹⁴⁵ Sudō, "Sōdai no ūten," p. 362.

¹⁴⁶ Hamashima Atsutoshi, "T'u-ti k'ai-fa yu k'o-shang huo-tung: Ming-tai chung-ch'i Chiang-nan ti-chu chih t'ou-tzu huo-tung," in *Chung-yang yen-chiu-yüan ti-erb-chieh kuo-chi Han-hsiieh hui-i lun-wen chi: Ming-Ch'ing yü chin-tai-shih tsu*, ed. Chung-yang yen-chiu-yüan (Taipei, 1989), pp. 101-22.

fields. Owners of fields outside the polders felt excluded and deprived of an irrigation backup in times of drought. Not surprisingly, these polders became the object of much criticism in Southern Sung and Yüan writings.¹⁴⁷

Yet in the debate over polders the government eventually had few, if any, options. Its stance zigzagged repeatedly – from favoring water transport to accepting land reclamation, and from assuming a central role in the reshaping of the delta's landscape to ceding that role to local landlords – and in the end it came to accept the inevitable transformation of the landscape. The Wu-Yüeh kingdom's system for the drainage and distribution of water, however well it had served the delta in the tenth century, had not entailed the full-scale settlement and polderization of the eastern half of the delta. As the delta's population increase during the eleventh and twelfth centuries made such expensive land investment both desirable and profitable, many powerful local families and northern immigrants recognized the benefits that could accrue to them from stressing land reclamation rather than drainage. What is remarkable, then, is their success in achieving this land expansion (and often its grain production increases) often against the official wishes of the government and the demands of landowners upstream in the delta's core.¹⁴⁸

Rice and other commercial goods

Blessed with this grain surplus from the early Southern Sung, Liang-che-hsi regularly provided supplies of rice to its neighboring provinces – Liang-che-tung, Fu-chien, Chiang-nan-tung, and Chiang-nan-hsi – particularly in years of shortage. T'ai-chou and Wen-chou, whenever stricken by drought, imported their rice. Shao-hsing and Ming-chou did so more regularly, in order to meet burgeoning food demands that even their bumper harvests could not satisfy. Farther down the southeastern coastline, Fu-chou prefecture in Fu-chien, if less regularly, imported Liang-che-hsi rice on boats that in the early twelfth century would hold up to a thousand bushels.

Another Liang-che-hsi product, silk cloth, also became more widely available for purchase from the second century of Sung rule. In the Northern Sung the tasks of weaving and decorating complex cloth had remained too costly and intricate for most peasant households, especially in competition with better-funded urban establishments. Also, many of the Sung innovations evident in surviving examples of Sung silk textiles concerned the weaving and ornamentation of twill, satin, tabby, and tapestry, types of work and cloth that required

¹⁴⁷ Watabe and Sakurai, *Chūgoku Kōnan no inasaku bunka*, pp. 64–112.

¹⁴⁸ Chou Sheng-ch'un, "Sung Yüan shih-ch'i Chia-ting she-hui ching-chi te fa-chan," in *Chia-ting wen-hua yen-chiu*, comp., *Chung-kuo li-shih wen-hsien yen-chiu-hui* (Sian, 1990), pp. 21–9.

highly specialized skills and took up considerable time. Yet, in the view of one recent study, over the course of the Southern Sung some of these distinctions between rural and urban silk production diminished.¹⁴⁹ Village households in the lower Yangtze delta made a considerable number of small technical innovations in sericulture that saved time, increased output, and eased the way for greater participation by peasants in the weaving and decoration of relatively simple versions of silk cloth. Over time, then, these changes enabled the various tasks of sericulture production to be adopted by an increasing number of peasants in first the delta's uplands and later its lowlands.

These improvements in lower Yangtze valley sericulture during the twelfth century increased production, hastened the pace of work, and lowered costs. First, in Hu-chou prefecture peasants created a more hardy mulberry tree with thick foliage by grafting the leafy Lu version of the mulberry tree onto the sturdy Ching version. In central China this new type of mulberry tree and others had two crops a year; in south China it was three crops, leading one outsider to conclude that the delta area (Wu) produced far more mulberry leaves than modern Shantung or Ho-pei. Second, producers in Hu-chou heated up silkworm rooms, thereby shortening their growing time from thirty-five days to as few as twenty-five. With the spinning of silk yarn from cocoons thereby speeded up, the annual production of yarn increased and its price fell. Third, expert breeders in Hu-chou eventually made silkworm frames that combined the efficiency of the northern frame with the ease of the southern frame, resulting in the quicker production of yarn. In all, these changes would have made the practice of sericulture in all its stages of production more profitable and thus more attractive to the delta's peasants and landowners.

Yet, the conversion did not occur rapidly. In the late eleventh century, Liang-che circuit was already known for its silk gauze and plain silk cloth, and its gauze payments accounted for two-thirds of the total volume of gauze silk that the Southern Sung court annually received from throughout the empire. But well into the twelfth century, sericulture practice was taken up primarily by Liang-che peasants in some of the surrounding mountains rather than in the delta itself.

In Hu-chou prefecture, for instance, households in the lowland counties focused on converting their lake-bottoms into rice fields and on planting ramie on the banks of these paddies for their clothing. In the upland counties of An-chi and Wu-k'ang, by contrast, peasants gained a reputation for their skill in sericulture, be it the planting of mulberry trees, the growing of silkworms, the spinning of yarn, or the weaving of cloth. Specialization here

¹⁴⁹ Angela Yu-yun Sheng, "Textile use, technology, and change in rural textile production in Song China (960-1279)" (diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1990).

took place in all these stages of silk production during the Sung. Some rich households maintained ten *mu* of mulberry trees. Other households specialized in rearing several hundreds of frames of silkworms. Yet other upland families took command of several stages of the process, to the extent that they stopped farming rice and other grains: "A family of ten persons rears ten frames of silkworms, obtaining twelve catties of cocoons from each frame. Each catty yields 1.3 ounces of thread, and from every 5 ounces of thread one length of small silk may be woven, and this exchanges for 1.4 bushels of rice."¹⁵⁰ This practice proved less demanding and more profitable than upland rice farming, with the market for silk goods also providing peasants with a welcomed cushion of stability even in times of food shortage: "The price of silk usually follows that of rice. Thus supplying one's food and clothing by these means ensures a high degree of stability."¹⁵¹ Such cash protection from the whims of the rice harvest would have been one important factor in the eventual willingness of upland peasants to switch from agriculture to sericulture not only in Hu-chou. A hundred miles to the south in the Wu-chou county of I-wu, residents of the county seat had been weaving silk for a living since the 1040s. But, come the mid-twelfth century, presumably when this attested parallel in silk and rice price movements would have become evident, many peasants in the mountain valleys around I-wu county seat also took up silk weaving (it is not clear to what extent they consequently stopped grain cultivation).¹⁵²

In the lowlands of the Yangtze delta the villagers proved less enthusiastic about sericulture for most of this second century of Sung rule. Doubtless, the need for a considerable investment of time and money dissuaded them from converting their low-lying paddy fields or marshlands into mulberry orchards, particularly when they were already profiting greatly from improved rice-harvest performances as well as from their harvesting another crop during the farm year. In the year 1130, villages in the eastern delta prefectures of Su-chou and Hsiu-chou were contrasted with those in Hang-chou and Hu-chou for not growing mulberry trees and weaving silk. The silk cloth that landowners in the first two of these prefectures handed in as tax payment was said to be shipped in from elsewhere. Even as late as 1178 an official won special tax-payment arrangements for Su-chou in Liang-che-hsi and for Tai-p'ing prefecture in Chiang-nan-tung on the grounds that their local farmers did not produce cloth.¹⁵³ Instead, Su-chou's villages in Wu county, and especially its Tung-t'ing-shan area, were known for their mulberry trees by, respectively, the

¹⁵⁰ Ch'en, *Nung-shu hsia*, p. 21. ¹⁵¹ Ch'en, *Nung-shu hsia*, p. 21.

¹⁵² SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 18, p. 4a-b. ¹⁵³ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 70, pp. 71b-72a.

end of the eleventh century and the start of the twelfth century, and Su-chou's peasants commonly sold their silk yarn directly to urban weavers. Thus even if some delta village households in the twelfth century were producing cloth, most of them were far more interested in expanding their arable land by draining lakes and marshes than by taking up sericulture, particularly weaving, as a full-time occupation.

Merchants and boat transport

The Sung's loss of the Grand Canal and its link to the north was undoubtedly a disaster for the dynasty, but one from which the southern economy soon recovered. This nearly 1,200-kilometer canal, ever since its completion in 610 under the Sui dynasty, had linked the north China plain and its capitals with the prosperous cities and lowlands of the Yangtze valley. Throughout the eleventh century it had annually provided the capital, K'ai-feng, and northern troops with 6.2 million bushels of tax grain; that is, two and a half times more than the peak T'ang figure, in 738, of grain tax shipped up the canal from south China.¹⁵⁴ As the regular passage of these boats was clearly essential to the dynasty's survival, the Northern Sung court devoted considerable time and money to the Canal's upkeep. The most troublesome section was the northernmost third of the Canal, the Pien river section that linked the Huai river at Lake Hung-tse in Ssu-chou with the Yellow River at Ho-yin county just west of K'ai-feng. The Pien's water level rose from the third lunar month to the tenth lunar month due to the turbulent inrush of muddy water from the Yellow River, while for the next six dry months it dropped below the canal's average depth of three meters and width of ten meters. Boat passage during the winter and spring months, when cold weather had not frozen the canal's surface, thus required regular dredging of its bed. The tonnage of boats used on this section, though significantly lower than the tonnage of boats along the Yangtze, virtually doubled over the course of the eleventh century to as much as 500 *liao*.

Elsewhere on the canal, in the middle section along the Huai river plain and then south of the Yangtze in the lower Yangtze delta, boat transit was easier. Water and waterways were more plentiful. New double slipways and flash locks, the most famous being the "three locks and eight slopes" stretch in the Huai valley, were constructed in the mid-eleventh century; those built

¹⁵⁴ SHY (1965) *shih-buo* 42, p. 2a-b; and Aoyama Sadao, *Tō Sō jidai no kōtsū to chishi chizū no kenkyō* (Tōkyō, 1963), pp. 213-56, and 352-3 for indications of even greater rates of difference between T'ang and Sung Grand Canal tax deliveries.

along the stretch between Chen-chou and Hang-chou in 1026 were mostly made of stone. And the tonnage was two to four times greater than on the Pien river boats.¹⁵⁵

Due to the Jurchen invasion and capture of north China the Sung lost the canal's northernmost section and saw its middle section suffer great damage. Its transportation network was thus made smaller and simpler, and its main lifeline was no longer a man-made canal but a vibrant river, the Yangtze. The savings the dynasty gained from no longer having canal maintenance costs were, however, cancelled out by its need to keep navy fleets in some ports along the river, since for most of its final thousand-mile passage to the sea the Yangtze coursed perilously close to the Jurchen border and its garrisons of troops and cavalry. Thus the only portion of the canal that survived largely unaffected by the Sung's loss of the north and that remained relatively safe from further attack was the portion in the delta, the route that stretched from the Yangtze port of Chen-chiang (Jun-chou) southward to Hang-chou and then eastward to the coastal port of Ming-chou in northern Liang-che-tung. For the next century and a half this shortest section of the Northern Sung Grand Canal system would not just lead an endless stream of boats to the new capital, Hang-chou. It would also serve as the central link in a new national system of water transport that connected the thriving boat traffic of the Yangtze with the highly profitable oceangoing trade of the southeast coast. Unlike the Northern Sung canal system, this waterway system had the south's surplus grain and other products circulate predominantly within south China. It also, importantly, encouraged traders to replace the lost markets of the north with others either farther to the south inside the empire or overseas in the wealthy ports of Japan and southeast Asia.

To develop these new trading networks, Southern Sung merchants could draw on south China's considerable resources for boat construction and the organization of water transport. Boat transportation had long provided vital support to the southeast economy, since, according to an eleventh-century account, it could be as much as five or six times cheaper than land transport. Already in the early ninth century it was reported that "no county or prefecture in the southeast lacks communications by water, and so most of the empire's profits based on trade depend on the use of boats."¹⁵⁶ With this intricate network of waterways so readily available, with wages far lower for private (as opposed to government) crews, and with the relative cost of water transport so cheap, boat construction continued to be centered in the south,

¹⁵⁵ Joseph Needham, *Civil engineering and nautics*, Part 3 of *Physics and physical technology*, Volume 4 of *Science and civilisation in China*, ed. Joseph Needham (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 351–3.

¹⁵⁶ Li Chao, *T'ang-kuo shih-p'u* (Shanghai, 1957) *hsia*, p. 62.

particularly for private trade. All but four of the fifty-one boat construction sites identified in Sung sources were located in the Yangtze valley or points south, the principal centers being southern Chiang-nan-hsi, coastal Liang-che-tung, Ch'ang-sha in Ching-hu-nan, and coastal Fu-chien. One modern study of this industry, focusing mainly on the Southern Sung, has listed at least thirty-five types of boat distinguished by their river system or port of origin, ten types of seagoing vessel, twenty-one kinds of functionally specific boat, and ten kinds of warship. Unfortunately, no figures provide even a rough estimate of the total number of vessels of all these types in operation during the Southern Sung. But the boats officially registered during the mid-Southern Sung in just the coastal Liang-che-tung prefectures of Ming-chou, T'ai-chou, and Wen-chou numbered 15,454 for those vessels less than ten Chinese feet wide in the beam and another 3,833 for all larger vessels.¹⁵⁷

Perhaps a more accurate sign of the importance of boating in southern lowland prefectures are some twelfth- and thirteenth-century estimates of the population that lived on boats or made a living from them as owners, shipping agents, helmsmen, polers, crewmen, officers, trackers, transshippers, boatbuilders, and shipyard workers. Writing about northeastern Ching-hu-nan in c. 1100, Fan Chih-ming (d. 1119) observed that "most of the middle-grade households, with property of no more than fifty strings of cash, live on boats, going up and down the rivers with 40 to 50 percent of them making a living from fishing."¹⁵⁸ In c. 1170 the poet-official Lu Yu (1125-1210), when travelling up the Yangtze near Chiang-chou prefecture in Chiang-nan-hsi circuit, was startled by coming across a floating village of southern Chinese. A boatman, accustomed to life on this river, took it in stride:

We encountered on the Yangtze a wooden raft, over thirty Chinese feet wide and over 150 Chinese feet long, with thirty to forty families on top of it. Wives and children, chickens and dogs, and mortar stones were all there. Amongst them, there were small paths crisscrossing in all directions. There also were shrines to gods. It is not something I have normally seen. A boatman said, "This raft is only a small one. On the big ones they spread out soil to make vegetable gardens, and they open liquor shops. They all cannot re-enter harbors [presumably due to their size], and so they travel only on the Great Yangtze."¹⁵⁹

Such "hamlets on water" housed, as did boats in Fu-chien and Liang-che, otherwise landless peasants unable or unwilling to eke out an existence on terra firma. In some southeastern counties the population which lived off, or lived on, boats was thought to account for up to a third of the total population.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Shiba, *Sōdai shōgyōshi kenkyū*, p. 74.

¹⁵⁸ Fan Chih-ming, *Yüeh-yang feng-t'u chi* (Taipei, 1976), p. 35.

¹⁵⁹ Lu, *Ju Shu chi* 3, p. 34. ¹⁶⁰ Shiba, *Sōdai shōgyōshi kenkyū*, p. 103.

This estimate, even if we take this to include part-time boat fishing, is doubtless an exaggeration. But it helps to persuade us of the validity of another claim that in the Liang-che-tung prefectures of Ming-chou, Wen-chou, and T'ai-chou roughly 200,000 persons were engaged full- or part-time in just the water-transport business during the twelfth century.¹⁶¹

The expanding role of boating in the south's economy during the Sung was encouraged by the introduction of improvements made in boat construction and technology since the late T'ang. Sung boats tended to have more and larger masts (commonly two or three, but on a few seagoing vessels as many as twelve masts) and better-woven sails (made of reeds or bamboo matting in the south and linen in the north). When at sea, they had rudders of up to fifty feet long, long tillers, and, most famously, the compass. Usually propelled by sails along the sea coast or on the Yangtze, they relied on punting in delta lowlands, hauling in river rapids, and multi-manned oars in all places where sails proved unhelpful. Some boats, military as well as commercial, had as many as four paddlewheels.

The boats themselves were far bigger than in the T'ang. Oceangoing vessels could hold up to 5,000 piculs (c.300 tons); when carrying nothing but soldiers, they could have as many as 600 passengers. Far more common were the medium-sized sea vessels, stretching over 100 Chinese feet in length, thirty Chinese feet in height, and twenty-five Chinese feet in the beam. These impressive boats had cargoes of 2,000 piculs (c.120 tons) and crews of sixty. The barges that had worked the Pien river section of the Grand Canal had held cargoes of just 250–500 bushels apiece. But the Yangtze river boats held up to 1000–1,600 bushels and measured as long as sixty to seventy feet. Without cargo, they could carry as many as fifty passengers. Most boats, however, were much smaller, partly because so many people in the south were using them on a regular basis.¹⁶²

Market institutions and financial institutions

In taking advantage of the early Southern Sung commercial opportunities and the boating resources of south China, Sung merchants proved admirably resourceful. As middlemen and traveling merchants they developed new and distinctive roles for themselves, achieving considerable functional diversification. They created and made use of a wide variety of financial and marketing practices to improve their access to capital and to use it more efficiently. These practices in all likelihood date from before the twelfth century, but often are first mentioned in twelfth-century sources. They show how in an increasingly

¹⁶¹ Shiba, *Sōdai shōgyō shi kenkyū*, p. 103.

¹⁶² Shiba, *Sōdai shōgyō shi kenkyū*, pp. 58–70.

commercialized economy merchants expanded their range of financial contacts and developed new ways to distribute their goods and services below the county-seat level.

The most famous of these financial innovations, paper money, was in fact introduced before the Sung. Originating as certificates of deposit issued for merchants by provincial governments' representatives in the ninth-century capital, Ch'ang-an, paper money had evolved by 1024 in Szechwan into government-printed banknotes. However, before the end of the T'ang dynasty paper money was also being drawn up and exchanged by private merchants engaged in long-distance trade. This private use of paper money expanded in the eleventh century, when sixteen merchants in the Ch'eng-tu area of Szechwan started to use it regularly as promissory notes and bills of exchange.¹⁶³

In addition, twelfth-century sources indicate that long-distance merchants devised a remarkable set of business practices and institutional arrangements to expand their trade. Credit was acquired through local brokers or middlemen. Futures contracts containing factor and commission terms were signed in advance of the collection of goods. Commercial partnerships became more common and more complicated. By the mid-twelfth century, if not much sooner, their varieties included associations of partners (*chiu-bo huo-pan*), joint-capital partnerships (*lien-ts'ai ho-pen*), and associations of members of the same trade without joint capital.

At times, these contractual arrangements could be harshly unequal, as when in the Northern Sung a wealthy party might invest in a traveling merchant's domestic-market activities, in the manner of the medieval European practice of "commenda." In eleventh-century K'ai-feng, it was "the general practice of the rich to entrust their money to others, calculate the profit gained from it, and take half of this sum, a practice known as 'putting one's money to use (*hsing-ch'ien*).' The rich regard those who borrow on these terms as equivalent to semi-servile retainers (*pu-ch'u*)."¹⁶⁴ By the second half of the twelfth century, such borrowers had begun to receive far better treatment. A native of Ching-hu-pei circuit, well known in the middle and lower Yangtze valley for his skill at commercial management, was entrusted by a wealthy Hang-chou resident with 100,000 strings of cash to invest as he saw fit. Within three years, this manager doubled his supporter's base capital. After paying over the profit, he next proceeded to triple the base capital. When he learned that his investor-employer had passed away, he went back to Hang-chou to pay his respects and hand over to the investor's son and heir all 300,000 strings of capital. In

¹⁶³ Lin Wen-hsün, *Sung-tai Ssu-ch'uan shang-p' in ching-chi yen-chiu* (K'un-ming, 1994), pp. 85-91; and Yang Lien-sheng, *Money and credit in China: A short history* (Cambridge, MA, 1952), pp. 52-3.

¹⁶⁴ Shiba, *Sōdai shōgyō shi kenkyū*, p. 442.

return, he received from the son a cash reward that approximated a third of all this cash.¹⁶⁵

These arrangements for the domestic market also served to fund overseas trading ventures, such as several undertaken by a late twelfth-century Fu-chienese. Using wealth already acquired abroad, he profitably led some of these voyages himself. Others, however, he entrusted to commercial managers (*hsing-ch'ien*), who might even, as in one 1178 voyage, serve as the shipmaster of an overseas junk manned by thirty-eight officers and crew under a chief mate. Ten years later he returned to China with profits of several thousand percent. Perhaps because of the degree of these managers' success, they seem to have suffered little of the dependence that had marked their relations with their fund masters a century earlier.¹⁶⁶

Some kinds of commercial partnership involved groups of merchants investing unequal amounts of capital. For example, in the late twelfth century, in Ching-hu-nan and Ching-hu-pei circuits, an extensive network of rice merchants regularly linked small peddlers and small rice-boat operators with large-scale rice traders and their ships. In contrast, some merchants commonly joined with other merchants of roughly equal financial standing to engage in investment partnerships that usually lasted no more than three years. The author Hung Mai (1123–1202), in his famous collection of anecdotes, *The record of the listener* (*I-chien chih*), gives numerous instances of these arrangements, such as the Hang-chou tea merchant who peddled tea with thirty companions in Ch'ang-shu county of Su-chou prefecture in 1194, a group of twelve associated merchants who passed through Lien-chou in Kuang-nan-tung circuit, and a wealthy Fu-chienese merchant from Ch'ang-lo county in Fu-chou who voyaged north into Liang-che-tung circuit with numerous other merchants in order to sell cloth they had purchased in Fu-chou.¹⁶⁷ The scholar-official Yeh Shih (1150–1223) tells of a T'ai-chou travelling merchant who rose to wealth from profits that he acquired through investments and partnerships made with a variety of other merchants. Other wealthy men joined in somewhat longer joint-capital investment schemes that put money into tax-exempt monastery pawnshops, if only to evade taxes:

This practice, known as "collecting and tying" (*tou-niu*), had rich people combine to pool their resources and accept a common set of rules. It is much the same way everywhere. According to these regulations, ten persons will join a group, whose capital may altogether amount to anywhere between one and five thousand strings of cash. The duration of the

¹⁶⁵ Hung Mai, *I-chien chi*, ed. Ho Cho (1171; Peking, 1981) 8, p. 1446.

¹⁶⁶ Hung, *I-chien chi* 6, p. 443. During the Sung a ship on a commercial voyage was ordinarily headed by a commander, a deputy commander, and an accountant, all of whom managed the vessel on behalf of its owner(s).

¹⁶⁷ Hung, *I-chien chi* 4, pp. 1167–8, and 1, pp. 1059–60.

group's operation is set usually at ten years, and at the end of each year the group meets to work out its profits, which are never less than several fold, while leaving the capital sum invested as before. No money is initially paid into the government for the purchase of monk-ordination certificates. It is merely a scheme designed to obtain profit under false pretenses.¹⁶⁸

The operation of these joint investment partnerships can be examined in a mathematical problem included in the *Mathematical treatise in nine sections* (*Shu-shu chiu-chang*) (1247 ed.) of Ch'in Chiu-shao (c. 1202-61). Although the dealings it describes are perhaps more complex than those practiced a century earlier, it essentially deals with a kind of investment and division of profits that for sure would have been made in the twelfth if not also the eleventh century: a four-party partnership that collectively made an investment (of 424,000 strings of cash) in a Chinese trading venture to southeast Asia. Each party's original investment consisted of precious metals like silver and gold and commodities like salt, paper, and monk certificates (and their accruing tax exemption). Yet the value of their individual investments varied considerably, as much as eightfold. Likewise, each party's share of the profits varied greatly, evidently in proportion to its overall share in the total investment. While social and family ties may have shaped the circle of potential co-investors, they affected little, if at all, an investor's eventual share of the profits, or losses.¹⁶⁹

Contrary to the impression given by the statistics in this mathematical problem, investment in long-distance or overseas trade was not restricted just to big investors. Rather, in the seagoing ventures of merchants along the southeast coast large numbers of relatively poor people made investments, sometimes of just small sums of money. By engaging in a practice known as "leaking currency by entrusting it," many lower- and middle-income households, according to the thirteenth-century official Pao Hui (1182-1268), handed ten to a hundred strings of cash apiece over to maritime traders to invest in their overseas ventures. Often hailing from these traders' area of the southeast or perhaps knowing them as kinsmen, these households supplied small investments in such numbers that Pao held these ordinary households partly responsible for the flight of copper cash from China.¹⁷⁰ With the consequent reduction in the domestic circulation of coinage from the last third of the twelfth century, the government felt obliged to adopt a dangerously inflationary policy of printing paper money.

Another means of support for the commercial economy in the second century of Sung rule, especially after the Jurchen had retreated to north China, was

¹⁶⁸ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 70, p. 102a-b.

¹⁶⁹ Shiba, *Sōdai shōgyō shi kenkyū*, p. 118.

¹⁷⁰ Shiba, *Sōdai shōgyō shi kenkyū*, p. 460.

an expansion of marketing facilities in the Yangtze valley. While no empire-wide commercial tax quota record survives for the Southern Sung as it does for all of Northern Sung China in c.1077, a great deal of literary evidence shows a significant growth of smaller markets. To the ordinary visitor, they would have been most noticeable on the outskirts of large cities, where they were already evident in the eleventh century. In 1072, long before Hang-chou enjoyed its peak of prosperity as the capital of the Southern Sung, its storehouses were described by a visiting Japanese Buddhist monk as lining both banks of the Ch'ien-t'ang river for a full mile.¹⁷¹ Other major cities whose suburbs were reported during the Southern Sung to contain large merchant storehouse areas include Chen-chiang, Chien-k'ang (present-day Nanking), and O-chou (present Wu-ch'ang).

Yet in the second century of Sung rule, it is the spread of rural storehouses, often associated with inns, and storage firms (*ta-fang*) which shows the extent to which commercial practice had penetrated China's rural economy. Off the beaten track, away from the main trunk roads for trade and transport, the countryside was dotted with many rural settlements containing inns and storehouses. In north China under Jurchen rule, a trip of less than fifty miles in the mid-twelfth century could take one through not just two county seats but also three such settlements with inns. In south China at this time, as in Chiang-nan-hsi circuit, such villages often had storehouses and functioned as rural market sites, even if their market days were scheduled only at several days' interval. Their hostels normally included restaurants for travelers, stables for their horses and carriages, and warehouses for storing goods until their purchase by another merchant. The innkeeper who arranged these sales functioned also as a market broker (*ya-jen*), just as one of his Chinese designations (*tien-chu ya-jen*) indicates. Required by the local yamen to register his own and his hostel's name, location, and types of transaction, he would in return receive from the yamen a wooden license that legitimized his work as a commercial middleman.

These inn proprietors, as vividly recounted by Hung Mai, worked as agents-on-commission in close co-operation with traveling merchants. In the hilly Chiang-nan-hsi prefecture of Fu-chou, for example, the merchant Ch'en T'ai ran a very profitable firm that sold linen cloth woven by village households in Fu-chou and the neighboring prefecture of Chi-chou. To acquire this cloth, Ch'en made advanced payments to a network of brokers (*tsang*), who stored under contract locally produced linen cloth at their rural inns-cum-warehouses until Ch'en on his annual winter trip could take these goods back home. One

¹⁷¹ Jōjin, *San tendai Godaisan ki*, in Shimazu Kusako, *Jōjin ajari no baba no shū: San tendai Godaisan ki no kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1959) 1, p. 279.

such broker used 500 strings of cash of earnings from Ch'en to build a storehouse for several thousand bolts of linen cloth that Ch'en would annually collect.

The proprietors of other inns-cum-storehouses might independently oversee the sale of goods left in their care by itinerant merchants. Some of these merchants traveled a thousand miles up the Yangtze from coastal Liang-che-tung and left their goods at inns under contracts of credit-purchase or credit-sale. Normally, they entrusted their goods on long-term credit to the relatively trustworthy owners of large storehouses, who in turn proved eager to make a quick profit from their own use of these goods.

The extensive presence of these inns-cum-storehouses in the Southern Sung countryside was evident when the government in 1169 introduced a measure to monetarize the provision of labor service duties (*mien-i fa*). This new law explicitly sought to register and tax non-farming rural enterprises, including businesses like "pawnbroking," "shop buildings with storehouses," "establishments for storage and stockpiling," "inns-cum-stores," "boat rentals," "rental of oxen," and "liquor-brewing." Henceforth, county magistrates ordered village elders to investigate and report the opening or closure of any hostel, warehouse, and distillery, all of which were now officially designated "family-property wealth" (*chia-yeh wu-li*), "operations" (*ying-yün*), "nonagricultural occupations" (*i-yeh*), and "skilled expertise" (*chi-yeh*).¹⁷²

These inns-cum-storehouses were numerous enough in the middle Yangtze valley to become economically differentiated. A proposal by the influential scholar-official Chu Hsi (1130-1200) on how to handle famine relief in Nan-k'ang in Chiang-nan-hsi circuit divided this commandery's potential relief recipients (other than farmers) into three groups. Group A was made up of people who successfully ran hostels; they were to receive no government famine relief. Group B consisted of people with a moderate amount of property barely sufficient to support them; they were to receive rations from an emergency granary in the county seat. And Group C included, in addition to poor scholar-officials, people engaged in less important commercial activities and the running of small and inactive inns; they all were to receive rations.¹⁷³ In other words, the proprietors of inns-cum-storehouses were included in at least two of these rural groups not engaged in agriculture.

These successes in agriculture, sericulture, and commerce help to explain the ability of the Sung court in Hang-chou to survive and then effectively mount an offensive against the Jurchen in the 1160s. Yet, it is wise to see that during the first four or five decades of the Southern Sung some sectors of

¹⁷² Shiba, *Sōdai shōgyō shi kenkyū*, pp. 412-13.

¹⁷³ Chu Hsi, *Hui-an hsien-sheng Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* (*Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* ed.) 10, pp. 14a-15a.

the Sung economy did not share in this overall revival. Probably the clearest example of unsolved problems concerned the sector of the economy that had flourished so much in the first century of Sung rule, the mining and minting of minerals. The problem in part can be traced to serious damage inflicted on copper mines in Chiang-nan-tung by the Jurchen during their brief invasion of south China at the start of the Southern Sung. Throughout the Northern Sung the output of these mines had been crucial for the circulation of both coins and goods; between 1086 and 1125 they had provided enough ore for the minting of 84.2 million copper coins; that is, an average annual production of 2.1 million coins.

Yet this output figure, only slightly below the peak annual figures of the preceding forty years, cannot be taken at face value. It actually conceals the considerable depletion of known copper deposits during the final decades of the Northern Sung. Copper production levels between 1078 and 1106 actually fell, and would have fallen far more than just 5 percent but for the increased use of an iron cementation process in the making of copper. This technical breakthrough, initiated by no later than the 1040s, rescued copper particles from water left over from the ordinary production process, thereby turning waste bits of copper into valuable metal. Gradually, enough copper mints adopted this process to have it account for 18 percent of all copper coin production in 1105 and then 26 percent at the close of the Northern Sung.¹⁷⁴ The increasing reliance on this waste water to meet the demand for copper coinage suggests a serious decline in the once rich copper deposits of these southern mines.

Arguably, then, the Jurchen's extensive damage to the copper mines in Chiang-nan-tung during their invasion south of the Yangtze only hastened the arrival of a copper production crisis that had been looming. Within a couple of years of the invasion, in 1132 the situation had so deteriorated that the cost of mining the copper ore was greater than the market value of its copper content.¹⁷⁵ Hence, during the rest of the Sung, annual copper production figures, even when using the iron cementation process, fell to less than a tenth of their peak eleventh-century levels. The two most productive mining locales in c. 1078, Ts'en-shui in Shao-chou, Kuang-nan-tung, and Ch'ien-shan in Hsin-chou, Chiang-nan-tung, suffered an even greater drop; the sixty-odd tons they each produced in 1166 was, respectively, less than 1 percent and 5 percent of

¹⁷⁴ Golas, *Mining*, p. 381; Hino Hino Kaisaburō, "Sōdai chōseiku no hatten ni tsuite," in his *Tōyō shigaku ronshū*, Volume 7: *Sōdai no kabe to kin'yū (ge)* (Tōkyō, 1983), pp. 213–14, 295; and Ch'i, *Sung-tai ching-chi shih*, Volume 2, pp. 560–1.

¹⁷⁵ Ch'i, *Sung-tai ching-chi shih*, Volume 2, p. 562; SHY (1965) *shih-buo* 34, p. 25b; and Golas, *Mining*, pp. 382–3.

what they had produced in c.1078.¹⁷⁶ Similar falls in production were recorded for iron, silver, and other minerals. In fact, seven centuries would pass before Chinese copper mining regained its eleventh-century production levels with the full-scale exploitation of new copper mines in the southwest province of modern Yunnan.

Deprived, then, of its eleventh-century copper and iron resources for the minting of new coins, the wounded dynasty stayed afloat financially by resorting to numerous measures of self-interested ingenuity. It opened a great number of new copper mines – ten times more mine sites were operating in 1162 than in 1084 – but their deposits proved to be shallow. It debased its copper coinage, continuing a practice begun in the decades before its loss of the north. Desperate for tax revenue, from the 1160s it revived the late Northern Sung government's practice of printing its own paper money certificates (*hui-tzu*), a form of indirect taxation that bought the dynasty a few decades of fiscal relief before succumbing to the inflationary printing of paper money from the 1190s. It raised the quotas of old taxes and invented new taxes, sometimes collecting all of these taxes years in advance. It made its tax weights heavier and its tax measures more capacious. It confiscated some generals' extensive landholdings and then sold them off with some of its own older holdings in the south. It reduced its officials' salaries sharply, at times refusing to pay them at all. And, despite its rhetorical claims of constant dependence on and commitment to peasants and officials, it relied heavily on tax revenues from overseas trade, domestic trade, and government monopolies like salt and liquor. In sum, the Southern Sung economy did not enjoy the fiscal cushion of a successful monetary policy that had enabled the Northern Sung economy to survive the rough uncertainties of the market and the repeated disappointments of its harvests. This decline of copper deposits also would hamper the economic development of north China in the twelfth and succeeding centuries. Stronger in industrial than in agricultural production, the north would lack a reliable and stable supply of currency until the influx of foreign silver from Japan and the New World in the late sixteenth century.

LATE SUNG (1163–1276)

Agricultural crisis in South China

In the mid-1160s, at the moment when Sung military forces had finally inflicted a heavy defeat on the Jurchen, a series of natural disasters and food

¹⁷⁶ Peter J. Golas, "The mining policies of the Sung government," in *Ryū Shiken bakase shōju kinen Sōshi kenkyū ronshū*, ed. Kinugawa Tsuyoshi (Kyoto, 1989), pp. 417–18.

shortages brought this era of good fortune to an end. The next four decades saw key circuits in south China – Chiang-nan-hsi and western Chiang-nan-tung in the Lake P'o-yang basin from 1168 to 1181, Liang-che-tung in 1180–1, Fu-chien in the 1180s, and Liang-che-hsi from 1194 to 1210 – undergo serious food shortages and famines that would restrain population growth and account for over a third of all the shortages and famines we have been able to compile for the entire Sung dynasty. In response to repeated government failures to respond adequately to such severe shortages, a book on famine relief, *A book for relieving famine and reviving the people* (*Chiu-huang huo-min shu*) by Tung Wei (d. 1217), was privately compiled, perhaps for the first time in Chinese history, stressing the need for famine relief by various private or semi-private organizations.¹⁷⁷ Government-managed relief granaries and relief operations were widely considered insufficient and inefficient.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, shortages in the southeast were reported not only for land and metals, but also for a great variety of goods. Consequently, in the half-century leading up to 1185, prices in Liang-che soared, reportedly threefold for cloth and grain; fivefold for meat, vegetables, and firewood; and tenfold for houses and land in the Liang-che area.¹⁷⁹

In this unsettled economic environment, the wealthy and well-connected sought to preserve their well-being. From 1168 high-ranked officials had the examination regulations altered to allow their sons to take less competitive examinations for official status and appointment; nonetheless, the pass rate on even these examinations remained low.¹⁸⁰ Not surprisingly, then, in 1172 Yüan Ts'ai's (1140–95) celebrated family instruction book broke conventional written wisdom to urge middle- and high-income families in the southeast to find income-earning occupations for their sons, now that they could no longer assume sufficient income from landholdings or government salary.¹⁸¹ And so (once again apparently for the first time in the Sung), detailed models of budget plans were drafted by members of both local and capital elites, with the aim of conserving wealth rather than expanding it.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Robert P. Hymes, "Moral duty and self-regulating process in Southern Sung views of famine relief," in *Ordering the world: Approaches to state and society in Sung dynasty China*, ed. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 280–309.

¹⁷⁸ Chang Wen, *Sung-ch'ao she-hui chiu-chi yen-chiu* (Chungking, 2001).

¹⁷⁹ Yeh Shih, *Yeh Shih chi*, ed. Liu Kung-ch'un, Wang Hsiao-yü, and Li Che-fu (Peking, 1961), Volume 2, p. 654.

¹⁸⁰ John W. Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning in Sung China: A social history of examinations* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 98–115.

¹⁸¹ Patricia Buckley Ebrey, trans., *Family and property in Sung China: Yüan Ts'ai's Precepts for social life* (Princeton, 1984), p. 267.

¹⁸² Joseph P. McDermott, "Family financial plans of the Southern Sung," *Asia Major*, 3rd series 4 No. 2 (1991), pp. 15–52.

The same pressures were felt by commoner families, perhaps most evidently in their increasing resort to infanticide.¹⁸³ Though practiced since at least the third century BC, infanticide first receives a notable amount of private and government attention only from the early twelfth century. All circuits of south China, including those in Szechwan, were said to suffer this abuse. In most circuits only baby girls were killed, often by drowning immediately after birth. But in some areas custom also restricted the number of boys: two sons and one daughter for ordinary peasant families in Yüeh-chou (Shao-hsing fu) and O-chou in Ching-hu-pei, and just two children, boys or girls, in Wu-yüan county, Hui-chou, in Chiang-nan-tung. In Shun-ch'ang county, Nan Chien-chou, Fu-chien, the economic rationale behind this practice was evident in the higher quota for rich families – two sons and one daughter compared to the one son acceptable to middle- or low-income families.

Fu-chien, in fact, was the area most closely identified with infanticide. The earliest report of infanticide there dates from the early eleventh century, when the practice was already described as “an old custom.” All signs, however, point to a great expansion of this custom there over the course of the twelfth century, especially in its four mountainous inland prefectures, where by c. 1200 all children but the first son were reportedly killed (families in coastal Fu-chou were said to practice less male infanticide since they commonly had one or even two sons become Buddhist monks). In the year 1110 the central government for the first time banned infanticide, and in the opening decades of the Southern Sung it offered cash, grain, and tax deductions to poorer households willing to halt this practice. But, many peasant households apparently never learned of this offer. And so despite the subsequent construction of some local granaries for needy babies (one such granary is said to have lasted from the early thirteenth century to at least 1738), the practice continued.¹⁸⁴ It helps to explain how the rate of Fu-chien's population growth fell precipitously from its early Sung heights.

And yet, the economic picture was not all gloomy. As we shall see in the following sections, the string of poor harvests and serious harvest failures that repeatedly struck southeast China and Yangtze valley circuits during these decades encouraged a variety of responses that enabled these areas to integrate their needs and economic potential far more successfully than ever before. Some areas relied on more land reclamation, others intensified their

¹⁸³ The seminal study of Sung infanticide is Sogabe Shizuo, “Dekijō kō,” in his *Shina seiji shūzoku ronkō* (Tōkyō, 1943), pp. 375–417. Two more recent studies are Ch'en Kuang-sheng, “Sung-tai sheng-tzu pu-yu feng-su te sheng-hsing chi ch'i yüan-yin,” *Chung-kuo shih yen-chiu* No. 1 (1989), pp. 138–43; and Liu Ching-chen, “Sung-jen sheng-tzu pu-yu feng-su shih-t'an: Ching-chi-hsing li-yu te chien-t'ao,” *Ta-lu tsa-chih* 88 No. 6 (1994), pp. 19–41.

¹⁸⁴ Sogabe, “Dekijō kō,” pp. 410–15; and *SHY* (1965) *hsing-fa* 2, p. 56a–b.

grain production, and some even commercialized their economy to the extent of specializing in certain products, both agricultural and nonagricultural, that were exported to pay for regular imports of grain grown elsewhere. If the economic development of south China showed marked regional differences, it did so within a more coherent, integrated, and productive economic structure that marked off these Yangtze Valley and southeast circuits from those of both north China and the southwest. Through this greater economic integration the southeast in particular strengthened and institutionalized its hegemony in most sectors of production, thereby allowing its different areas to share in the benefits accrued when each of them produced more of what it was best situated to produce.

*Chiang-nan-hsi and western Chiang-nan-tung in the
Lake P'o-yang basin, 1166–81*

The richest evidence of the late twelfth-century agricultural crisis in south China comes from the Lake P'o-yang basin, consisting of the circuits of Chiang-nan-hsi and western Chiang-nan-tung. From 1137 to the mid-1160s this region suffered only a few grain shortages (1140, 1148), with Chiang-nan-hsi enjoying a fine harvest in 1162. Even though drought and locusts seriously damaged its crops in 1163, it still in that year exported rice to flood-stricken Liang-che-hsi and Chiang-nan-tung. Also, in 1165 its grain prices remained level.¹⁸⁵

From 1166, however, the situation deteriorated drastically. In that year and the next, heavy rains damaged crops in Chiang-nan-hsi and Chiang-nan-tung, with many victims obliged to sell property and flee for food. In 1168 floods struck the prefectures of Jao-chou and Hsin-chou to the east of Lake P'o-yang; here too, many found it hard to eat and so set off to find food elsewhere. In the following year a food shortage was reported from Kuang-te commandery, and then in 1171 much of central and northern Chiang-nan-hsi shared in eastern Chiang-nan-tung's suffering from drought. In the southern prefectures of Kan-chou and commanderies of Nan-an and Chien-ch'ang the early rice crop suffered only slightly and the late rice crop not at all. The central prefectures of Chi-chou, Fu-chou, and Yüan-chou saw some of their crop saved by rain. But in the northern third of the circuit at least two-thirds of the rice crop was lost, prompting one official to report that "never has there been such hunger and harvest failure."¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 40, pp. 30b and 36a; 58, pp. 2a–3a, and 59, p. 40a–b.

¹⁸⁶ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 58, pp. 10a, 11b.

1172 saw a continuation of this catastrophic drought-inflicted famine throughout Chiang-nan-hsi up until a fine autumn harvest, and in 1173 came a prolonged drought in the southern third of Chiang-nan-hsi. In 1174, even with a bumper crop in Chiang-nan-hsi, the government still had to distribute 620,000 bushels of grain to hungry peasants. How many died from this succession of disasters is unclear, but an official in northern Chiang-nan-hsi echoed the view, already given three years earlier, that such death and disruption were unprecedented in his lifetime.¹⁸⁷

The worst years of these difficult decades, however, were yet to come in the early 1180s, particularly 1180 and 1181, when for the first time since 1136 famine and death were reported extensively throughout south China, from Szechwan and Ching-hu-pei to the Liang-che and Fu-chien coast. In 1180 and 1181, the government gave land tax exemptions to thirty-eight prefectures in Liang-che, Chiang-nan-hsi, Chiang-nan-tung, Ching-hu-pei, Huai-nan-tung, and Huai-nan-hsi circuits. Even in less stricken areas, such as Ching-hu-nan, Kuang-nan, and Liang-che-hsi, only a handful of prefectures reported a good harvest. One harshly stricken area was Nan-k'ang commandery at the mouth of Lake P'o-yang, with roughly three-quarters of its principal (and early-ripening) crop of rice lost to the drought and the later rice crop just a fifth of the earlier crop's normal harvest. By the end of 1180, some 217,883 people, in this commandery said to be of low population, had received government grants of rice to stave off starvation. In the following year a great number of Jao-chou residents fled famine by crossing north of the Yangtze into the Huai area.¹⁸⁸

Liang-che-tung, 1180-1

But the greatest loss of harvest and life during these years was apparently in Liang-che-tung circuit. In the first year a few of its prefectures, such as T'ai-chou and Ming-chou, suffered little grain shortage, but by the second year only three or five counties in its seven prefectures avoided drought. The most drought-stricken prefecture in these two years was Shao-hsing, an area more accustomed to floods. Natural disasters had stricken it in 1163, famine in 1165, and floods in 1167. The troubles of the early 1170s in the middle Yangtze valley posed apparently no serious trouble, but the 1180 and 1182 famines were, in the view of its village elders, the worst famines they could recall "for several decades and centuries." The government's provision

¹⁸⁷ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 40, p. 54a; 41, p. 3a; 58, p. 12a; and Liu I et al., comp., *Chiang-hsi t'ung-chih* (1881 ed.; Taipei, 1967) 98, p. 17b.

¹⁸⁸ Liu, *Chiang-hsi t'ung-chih* 98, p. 17b.

of grain relief to just 256,192 people – at a time when over 1.4 million were actually estimated to need this aid – suggests the extent of relief demands made on private parties as well as the very high number of famished in this year. As one contemporary observer commented, “none of the disasters of old was worse than this one.”¹⁸⁹

Ching-hu, 1171–1200

In Ching-hu-nan the harvests in the last three decades suffered a sharp decline. Beginning with a rice crop failure in some prefectures in 1171, Ching-hu-nan suffered no fewer than seven famines or food shortages over the next three decades. Although between 1171 and the end of the century not a single bumper or good harvest was recorded for a circuit that had prospered so consistently in the middle third of the century, Yeh Shih, writing at the start of the thirteenth century, attributes the persistent pressure on Ching-hu-pei's food supply to the repeated shipment of much of its surplus rice down the Yangtze to other areas of south China presumably in need of grain. Since even a bumper harvest left no surplus grain in the storages of Ching-hu-nan's middle-income families, small harvest setbacks posed serious problems to many of its farming families.¹⁹⁰ Ching-hu-pei, despite its proximity to the war-ravaged border area, had a more mixed harvest record. Bumper crops were reported in 1165, 1166, 1172 (Huang-chou), 1178, 1182, 1185, and 1186.¹⁹¹ But during these three decades its food shortages came just as often, especially in 1174, when it suffered famine like the rest of the Yangtze valley. Then, in the 1190s, conditions worsened. Shortages became more frequent, and were no longer relieved by a bumper crop.¹⁹² Both of these Ching-hu circuits suffered serious pressure on their grain production, with very little grain remaining in their government or private storeholds.¹⁹³ Thus, when a severe drought in 1214 threatened famine in Han-yang commandery and neighboring prefectures in Ching-hu-pei, the local officials summoned rice merchants to supplement the meagre local supplies, in order to prevent the death toll from rising steeply.¹⁹⁴

Fu-chien: food and trade, 1180s

Fu-chien's crisis arose from a succession of droughts and famine shortages in its coastal prefectures in the early and mid-1180s. From no later than the early

¹⁸⁹ Chu, *Hui-an hsien-sheng Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 16, pp. 21b, 23b–26a; and 17, p. 5a.

¹⁹⁰ Yeh, *Yeh Shih chi*, Volume 1, pp. 2–3.

¹⁹¹ *SHY* (1965) *shih-buo* 40, pp. 44b, 54a; 41, pp. 10a–b, 14a, 14b–15a.

¹⁹² Wang Yen, *Shuang-hsi wen-chi* (*Ssu-k'ü ch'üan-shu chen-pen* ed.) 20, p. 21a.

¹⁹³ P'eng Kuei-nien, *Chih-t'ang chi* (*Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* ed.) 6, p. 88.

¹⁹⁴ Shiba, *Sōdai Kōnan keizaishi no kenkyū*, pp. 437–46.

twelfth century, these four prefectures had in years of poor harvests imported surplus grain from Kuang-nan-tung and Liang-che. In the 1180s, when even in years of bumper harvests "their [local] supply is exhausted within half a year," this dependence on outside sources for famine relief was transformed into an annual practice after serious droughts in 1180 (Fu-chou, Hsing-hua, and Ch'üan-chou), 1181 (Chien-ning), 1184 (Chang-chou, Ch'üan-chou, Hsing-hua, and T'ing-chou), and 1185 (Fu-chou and Shao-wu). The coastal prefectures no longer turned to Fu-chien's four interior prefectures for surplus grain supply, if only because the acute shortage of arable land there had each of these interior prefectures ban the out-shipment of any grain by the early thirteenth century. So pressing was the demand for grain that all land in these prefectures had to be used solely for growing grain and all harvested grain solely for direct consumption. Even if some land remained planted with orange trees and some grain was still used to make liquor, the fear of widespread starvation that prompted this ban was desperate enough to explain why the practice of both female and male infanticide in these prefectures was so common.

Fu-chien's coastal prefectures, in confronting the same threat of hunger, also sought to extend their arable land. In the latter half of the twelfth century the Coastal Long Bridge and the Official Irrigation Network were constructed in Ch'üan-chou, both of them considered large-scale by local standards. In its Chin-chiang county a series of reclamation efforts resulted in southern Fu-chien's largest stretch of enclosed fields, almost two miles wide. In the Ch'ien-tas reign era (1165-73), commoners there built another coastal dike to repel the sea and enclose 100,000 *mu* watered once again by mountain streams. And, farther down the Fu-chien coast in Chang-chou, an assistant magistrate in 1180 opened up East Lake and built coastal dikes, dams, outlets, and ports in 612 places.

All this reclaimed land, even if it had long been brackish, often proved highly fertile after much hoeing and application of fertilizer. As Ch'en Fu-liang (1137-1203) wrote, "Land in Liang-che-tung and Fu-chien is turned into good fields only after it has been hoed several times, been given fertilizer, and been irrigated."¹⁹⁵ Chen Te-hsiu (1178-1235) in the thirteenth century describes a pattern of grain planting for Ch'üan-chou, Fu-chien, similar to what one might have expected of Chiang-nan-tung circuit in the Yangtze Valley. The low fields, he writes, were planted with late-ripening rice, the high fields with early-ripening rice, the dry spots with wheat, the wet places with rice, and the rocky fields with beans.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Ch'en Fu-liang, *Chib-chai wen-chi* (SPTK ed.) 44, p. 6b.

¹⁹⁶ Chen Te-hsiu, *Hsi-shan hsien-sheng Chen-chung wen-chi* (SPTK ed.) 40, p. 33b.

Yet, as suggested by this planting practice, Fu-chien's lowland farmers pursued two options that arguably linked them more regularly to the market than their counterparts in other lowlands of the empire. They practiced the multiple cropping of grain and the planting of non-grain products such as fruit trees, sugarcane, and cotton. The contribution of these two options to the sustenance of south China's rural economy and population during the late twelfth century and the thirteenth was considerable, as the Fu-chienese diversified their economy beyond the goal of producing grain and so could afford to receive annual imports of grain from Kuang-nan and Liang-che to feed their populations. By the early thirteenth century, they were described as "doing nothing but watching for [grain] boats from Kuang-nan."¹⁹⁷ Their farmers even stopped storing grain in preparation for poor harvests, as they were confident of regular grain shipments especially from this southern neighbor. In Fu-chou, drought and flood in 1205 would be relieved also with government aid, and in 1220 its people would be obliged to eat grass; no other famine or food shortage is reported for the entire coastal area until 1253 (and then for just two interior counties of Fu-chou). Thus, when natural disasters or misfortune reduced Kuang-nan's harvest production and kept the price of rice in coastal Fu-chien unseasonably high, the Fu-chien economy did not turn its back on nonagricultural sources of income. As we shall see, its local products and occupations instead became increasingly varied and geared for market exchange, in a manner that many other parts of south China would imitate only in the succeeding centuries of commercialization.¹⁹⁸

Liang-che-hsi: harvests, climate change, and epidemics, 1193–1224

In c. 1217 an official reviewing the afflictions of various southern circuits over the previous two decades summed up his account with a broad regional comparison: "People have died of warfare in Huai-nan-hsi and Huai-nan-tung, of banditry in Ching-hu-pei, Ching-hu-nan, Kuang-nan-tung, and Kuang-nan-hsi, and of bad harvests in [Liang]-che."¹⁹⁹ Thus, whereas Liang-che's residents had weathered the relatively high rice prices brought on by harvest problems elsewhere in the 1170s and 1180s, they ended up suffering much more from Liang-che's own grain shortages in the next two decades.²⁰⁰ Two exceptionally fine harvests and far lower grain prices in 1189 and 1190 were soon followed

¹⁹⁷ Chen, *Hsi-shan hsien-sheng wen-chung wen-chi*, 40, p. 33b.

¹⁹⁸ Clark, *Community, trade, and networks*, pp. 146–7; and Billy K. L. So (So Kee-long or Su Chi-lang), *Prosperity, region, and institutions in maritime China: The south Fukien pattern, 946–1368* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), pp. 71–9.

¹⁹⁹ Wang Mai, *Ch'ü-hsüan chi* (*Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen* ed.) 1, p. 13b.

²⁰⁰ Ts'ai Kan, *Ding-chai chi* (*Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen* ed.) 4, p. 6b.

in much of Liang-che by flooding in 1193 and a severe drought in 1194 that led to harvest failure, soaring grain prices, and famine. In the spring of 1195 in Ch'ang-chou many died of hunger, as in Liang-che as a whole in 1198. Two years later, starvation also killed off many of the 600,000 migrants fleeing harvest failures north of the Yangtze to Ch'ang-chou and other parts of Liang-che. Crop failure also hit parts of Liang-che-hsi in 1201, and the following year saw no improvement: "A great famine left the dead scattered across the marketplaces and many children were abandoned on the roads." In 1215 a severe drought and locust attack led to crop failure and famine throughout the circuit, and in 1216 the dead were strewn about the capital's alleyways. Finally, a crop failure struck rural areas in 1223, followed by a severe famine in 1224 in the Hang-chou area and in Chen-chiang commandery (where over 15,000 persons died of hunger and disease).

Although not every year's harvest proved so disappointing, bumper crops were exceptional. When the Liang-che native Chou Nan (1159-1213) spoke of the harvest of c. 1210 as one of great bounty with rice costing only 200 cash a *ton*, local elders recognized their exceptionally good fortune: "For some twenty-odd years we have never had this [kind of] harvest." Consequently, Chou warned his official superiors of an impending grain shortage in the supposed granary of the empire. Liang-che-hsi's granaries, he claimed, held less than a tenth of the grain needed to relieve its famines, while its farmers usually retained grain only for their own annual consumption.²⁰¹

To explain such harvest troubles and famines, it may seem sensible to refer to a drop in temperature that some scholars have discerned for the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Yet the warmest decades of the Southern Sung in the Liang-che-hsi region coincided with the very years of its agricultural crisis.²⁰² Instead, although the issue is far from decided, we would point to its farmers' determined concentration on growing late-ripening rice for sale elsewhere, the delta's ongoing irrigation problems brought about by the construction of polders, and the low level of its grain reserves due to its landlords' regular shipment of their surplus grain elsewhere in the southeast.

What is less contestable is the impact of a string of virulent epidemics on the lower Yangtze delta's population growth and possibly even its harvests at this time. Between 1162 and 1220 parts or all of the delta suffered serious epidemic attack no less than eighteen times, at a rate of almost once every three years.²⁰³ The three most lethal clusters took place in 1162-5, 1195-7,

²⁰¹ Chou Nan, *Shan-fang chi* (*Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen* ed.) 2, pp. 26a-27a.

²⁰² Chu Co-Ching (aka Chu Ko-cheng), "Climatic pulsations during historic time in China," *Geographical Review* 16 No. 2 (April 1926), esp. p. 279.

²⁰³ Information on these epidemics can be found in SS (1980) 62; Chung-kuo she-hui k'o-hsüeh-yüan li-shih yen-chiu-suo tzu-liao pien-hui, ed., *Chung-kuo li-tai tzu-jan tsai-hai chi li-tai sheng-shih nung-yeh*

and 1208–11. The first and third of these coincided with food shortages in Liang-che and with massive inflows of Huai-nan migrants fleeing war along the Chin border. But most of Liang-che's epidemics – identifiable as dysentery, probably smallpox, and possibly typhus – seem to have been home-spawned, with Hang-chou their principal target. They may have originated as viruses and pathogens encountered and disseminated during the extensive reclamation of Liang-che-hsi's and Liang-che-tung's marshes and lake-bottoms, or they may have arisen from an ecology of influenza in south China arising from a very close "bird–water–rice–man association" that saw domesticated pigs, ducks, fish, and other animals exchange their illness with their peasant rearers before being sold in nearby towns and cities. This interaction would have been closest in the summer months, precisely the time when after heavy rains epidemics were most commonly reported for Liang-che-hsi. In the end, Liang-che, virtually alone among the southern circuits, registered no household increase between 1162 and 1223. Poor registration was partly responsible, but so was the fact that its serious food shortages, famines, and epidemics came later than other circuits' in the mid-Southern Sung.

In sum, harvest results in the last third of the twelfth century signalled a significant threat to both per-capita production and consumption levels throughout southeast China. When these circuits suffered serious famines, their responses differed considerably in ways that mark this period as an important turning point in the agricultural history of south China. The middle Yangtze valley circuits south of the Yangtze, having relied greatly on grain shipments from elsewhere during their famines, afterwards turned to locally produced second crops like wheat to provide additional grain against future harvest failures. Liang-che-tung did likewise, while Liang-che-hsi continued to reclaim polder fields in its eastern stretches and extended its wheat cultivation on higher fields. Yet the most significant change for the structure of the Chinese economy occurred in Fu-chien. Its four coastal prefectures after the crisis annually imported rice to make up for their own production shortages while in return exporting a wide variety of other agricultural products like sugarcane and cotton or nonagricultural goods like ceramics and metal goods. In other words, the grain production increases in southeast China, particularly Kuang-nan circuits, were sufficient to support a coastal population in Fu-chien that now regularly lived off both coastal and international trade in its non-grain and nonagricultural products.

cheng-ts' e tzu-liao, pp. 85–143; Wang Te-i, *Sung-tai tsai-huang te chin-chi cheng-tse* (Taipei, 1970); Pi, *Hsi Tzu-chih t'ung-chien*; SHY (1965) *shih-buo* 58, pp. 15a, 15b, 7a, 22a, 28a; and Imura Kōzen, "Chihōshi ni kisaieraretaru Chūgoku ekirei ryakkō," *Chūgai iji shimpō* (1936 and 1937), 8 parts.

Wheat cultivation and double cropping

Much of the grain supply increase required by the Sung's expanding population in the last century of Sung rule, particularly in the middle Yangtze valley and the southeast coastal areas, came from the spread of wheat cultivation and the practice of double cropping of grain during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. When introduced to the lower Yangtze delta a millennium earlier by northern refugees, wheat had been regularly planted in Chien-k'ang and parts of coastal Liang-che area; that is, only the areas where these migrants had settled. But even there wheat remained a distinctly minority taste, serving in the late T'ang as no more than a second grain crop intended to reduce the risk of serious famine. Farther south, wheat cultivation was first recorded in Fu-chien as late as c.900 and remained an insignificant crop. In coastal Kwang-tung it was commonly considered unsuitable to the soil and climate until at least the late tenth century.²⁰⁴

Thanks in part to the encouragement of some central and local officials, the eleventh century had seen an expansion of wheat planting and consumption in south China. The influx of northern refugees from the Jurchen conquest of north China in 1126 then furthered its spread in at least the eastern parts of the Yangtze valley.²⁰⁵ Then the famines of the 1170s and early 1180s in southeast China prompted some upland farmers to grow it as a secondary crop to their principal crop of quick-growing rice.²⁰⁶ Requiring only limited amounts of water, it proved popular primarily in hilly areas with simple irrigation facilities, probably the very areas that had taken so swiftly to quick-growing Champa rice in the previous century.²⁰⁷

In the productive lowlands, however, the old, formidable obstacles to wheat cultivation persisted. The soil of southern paddy fields was usually too moist for a dryland crop like wheat, unless extensive and expensive drainage was undertaken. In many places, affordable seeds were often in short supply. And peasants, even when they knew the better techniques for wheat cultivation, still had other, perhaps more profitable, ways to spend their time in an agricultural calendar dominated by the demands of the rice crop. In the lower Yangtze delta in particular, wheat failed to gain widespread acceptance from farmers. While it was grown in some of Hsiu-chou's wetland fields in the late twelfth century and then in its "fine places in mountain fields" in the late thirteenth century and is often mentioned in poems by Fan Ch'eng-ta (1120-93) about the Su-chou countryside, its adoption in the paddies in the eastern half

²⁰⁴ Cheng, *Sung-tai ti-yü ching-chi*, p. 121. ²⁰⁵ Chuang, *Chi-lei pien shang*, p. 28a.

²⁰⁶ Sudō Yoshiyuki, "Nan Sō ni okeru mugisaku no shōrei to nimōsaku," in his *Sōdai keizai shi kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1962), esp. pp. 251-8.

²⁰⁷ Sudō, "Nan Sō ni okeru mugisaku no shōrei to nimōsaku," pp. 264-7.

of the delta can only have been limited and in places temporary. In Su-chou, Hu-chou, Ch'ang-chou, and Hsiu-chou the high (and dry) fields, the kind that were relatively adaptable for wheat cultivation, accounted for no more than 30 percent of their total arable land and were often used for other crops (e.g. beans) after any early-ripening fall rice harvest.²⁰⁸ In fact, in the 1430s a Su-chou prefect noted that its cultivators of wheat were few and their production low.²⁰⁹ Thus the adoption of wheat farming in southeast China during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was accomplished primarily in the less productive, and less irrigated, hilly areas which desperately needed more grain for their growing population.²¹⁰ Even so, its harvests would never match the returns from rice,²¹¹ thus reconfirming for a peasantry (which needed little convincing) the benefits of rice cultivation. In short, in south China wheat remained only one of many secondary crop options to many farmers.

Not surprisingly, then, some lowland peasants in southeast China, when forced or able to produce a second crop of rice, tried to do so. By the late twelfth century, probably stimulated by grain shortages and the agricultural crisis, the double-cropping of rice was being practiced in low-lying paddies in some prefectures such as Su-chou, Shao-hsing, Fu-chou, Ch'üan-chou, and Chang-chou.²¹² Yet its cultivation even in the hot and humid coastal areas of Fu-chien and Kuang-nan-tung never became the norm.²¹³ In Su-chou its planting and growing times usually did not fit the cultivation schedule determined by the requirements of the highly profitable principal crop of late-ripening rice; in Shao-hsing few grew it and its crop amounted to less than a tenth or twentieth of the early-ripening rice crop; and in Fu-chou it was grown in just three of the twelve counties.²¹⁴ Simply put, in the Southern Sung double-cropping of rice, even when supported as necessary by a sophisticated infrastructure of waterworks and management, never produced large enough second harvests to justify the effort for many peasants capable of finding other profitable uses for their land, labor, and time.²¹⁵ Since its practice, however, was concentrated in the coastal counties of Fu-chien and Kuang-nan-tung, its contribution to the growing integration of their economies may well have been more important than its quantitative contribution to grain production increases throughout the southeast.

²⁰⁸ Wang Chen, *Wang Chen Nung-shu* (Peking, 1981) 2, p. 23; and Yao, *Che-hsi shui-li shu chiao-chu*, p. 87.

²⁰⁹ Fan Chin-min and Hsia Wei-chung, *Su-chou ti-ch'u she-hui ching-chi shih: Ming-Ch'ing chüan* (Nanking, 1993), p. 72.

²¹⁰ Sudō, *Sōdai keizai shi kenkyū*, pp. 285 ff. ²¹¹ Sudō, *Sōdai keizai shi kenkyū*, pp. 298–9.

²¹² Shiba, *Sōdai shōgyō shi kenkyū*, p. 146; Liang K'o-chia, *Ch'un-hsi San-shan chih* (1182; Peking, 1990) 41, pp. 8251–2; and So, *Prosperity, region, and institutions in maritime China*, p. 28.

²¹³ So, *Prosperity, region, and institutions in maritime China*, p. 28.

²¹⁴ Liang, *Ch'un-hsi San-shan chih* 41, pp. 8251–2.

²¹⁵ So, *Prosperity, region, and institutions in maritime China*, p. 28.

Markets

By the close of the twelfth century this market integration was most evident in the distribution of rice, the item most often shipped and traded. The surviving sources indicate a greater scope and scale of circulation than was evident earlier on in the century. Now, four circuits – Liang-che-hsi, Chiang-nan-hsi, Ching-hu-nan, and Kuang-nan-tung – were involved in shipping most of the rice in circulation, either as tax payments or as private trade. Some of their own prefectures required imports of rice. But most of their surplus production was boated elsewhere in the empire: Liang-che-hsi to Liang-che-tung, coastal Fu-chien, and sometimes Huai-nan; Chiang-nan-hsi to Chiang-nan-tung, and sometimes Liang-che-hsi and Huai-nan; Ching-hu-nan to Chiang-nan-tung; Kuang-nan-tung to coastal Fu-chien, and sometimes Liang-che-tung. Huai-nan and Kuang-nan-hsi also sometimes supplied emergency rice shipments. The distribution of all this rice among south China's macroregions would be centered in six large urban markets: Ch'eng-tu in the upper Yangtze valley, Wu-ch'ang in Ching-hu-pei for the middle Yangtze valley, Chien-k'ang in the lower Yangtze valley, Canton (Kuang-chou) on the far southeastern coast, Fu-chou on the Fu-chien coast, and Hang-chou in Liang-che-hsi.

Unquestionably, the largest of these markets was in Hang-chou, since so many people, rich as well as poor, official and commoner, were attracted to live in the capital. By the mid-thirteenth century its residents numbered well over a million and would have annually required the import of over 4 million bushels of rice. Some of this rice was regularly shipped from circuits as far away as Kuang-nan-tung and Chiang-nan-hsi, some from prefectures as near as Su-chou and Hsiu-chou in the Yangtze delta. Of the eight prefectures and commanderies of the delta's Liang-che-hsi circuit, three relied heavily on regular imports of grain; two more needed bumper crops to be able to feed their populations. During the delta's tough times at the end of the twelfth century and the start of the thirteenth, just two of its prefectures, Su-chou and Hsiu-chou, could usually be relied on to produce enough rice to feed their residents and export any surplus rice to markets inside and outside the delta.²¹⁶

Complicating this analysis, however, are two factors. For economic reasons many delta peasants sold most of the high-quality rice they harvested and then bought for their own consumption cheaper Champa rice imported from elsewhere; they thus required rice imports for their table, even though they actually produced enough to support themselves. Furthermore, the assemblage of many official households in Hang-chou due to the establishment there of

²¹⁶ Joseph P. McDermott, "Land tenure and local control in the Liang-che circuit during the Southern Sung" (diss., Cambridge University, 1978), pp. 116-22.

the Southern Sung capital somewhat artificially expanded the delta's overall need for rice, especially locally produced rice. For these two reasons, then, the delta's prefectures would have become more involved in the region's rice trade, even if some of them did produce enough rice to feed themselves.

Helping these farmers in these prefectures gain access to this cheaper rice and sell off their own produce was a marketing network far more articulated than that of the eleventh century. Indeed, during the last century of Sung rule, at least up until the troubles of its final decades, an increasing share of village production in the southeast seems to have been made for the market. The extant evidence of this trend is greatest for the lower Yangtze delta and includes both quantitative data, like the substantial increase in its market sites and their commercial tax quotas, and nonquantitative evidence on the distribution of common products like rice and silk. In 1080, Liang-che's market towns numbered seventy-five; two centuries later in the mid-thirteenth century this figure rose by 40 percent to 106.²¹⁷ Although they were roughly equally distributed between Liang-che-hsi and Liang-che-tung throughout the Sung, few were found in the relatively underpopulated, upland prefectures of Liang-che-tung. Instead, their location during the Southern Sung was concentrated in the lowlands of both Liang-che-hsi and Liang-che-tung, such as the coastal plains of Ming-chou (modern Ningpo) and Shao-hsing prefectures, as well as areas of Ch'ang-chou, Su-chou, and Hsiu-chou close to, but not on, the Grand Canal.²¹⁸ In a pattern that would be repeated in later centuries, irregular village markets developed into regular markets, which then became fully fledged market towns.

This pattern of a roughly equal distribution of market towns between the two circuits of Liang-che appears at first sight not to have been repeated for Liang-che's markets, as 429 of its 696 markets, or 62 percent, were located in Liang-che-hsi in the Southern Sung.²¹⁹ Yet this statistic is strongly shaped by the serious undercounting of Liang-che-tung's markets, to a degree – just twenty-three markets, in scattered references, are recorded for four of its seven prefectures – that suggests for Liang-che-tung a share of Liang-che's markets similar to its 45 percent share of Liang-che's market towns. Certainly, the pervasive spread of the market throughout much of both Liang-che-hsi and Liang-che-tung is evident in some figures from thirteenth-century gazetteers.

²¹⁷ Much of what follows on market institutions and Liang-che comes from Ch'en Kuo-hsien, *Chiang-nan nung-ts'un ch'eng-shih-bua li-shih yen-chiu* (Peking, 2004), pp. 68, 79–82; and Lung Teng-kao, *Chiang-nan shih-ch'ang shih, shi-i chih shih-chiu shih-chi te pien-ch'ien* (Peking, 2003). Note that the above figures exclude Chien-k'ang, part of Chiang-nan-tung circuit in the Sung.

²¹⁸ Takamura Masahiko, *Chūgoku Kōnan no toshi to kurashi – mizu no machi no kankyō keisei* (Tōkyō, 2000), p. 19.

²¹⁹ Ch'en, *Chiang-nan nung-ts'un ch'eng-shih-bua li-shih yen-chiu*, pp. 79–82.

For example, Ch'ang-shu county in Su-chou had eight villages per periodic market, while the average number of periodic markets per rural district (*hsiang*) was no less than 3.4 in Ming-chou, 2.6 in Ch'ang-chou, and 1.6 in T'ai-chou.²²⁰

The emergence of more markets and market towns in the delta's lowlands resulted in part from concurrent increases in its population. But even greater rates of increase in the commercial tax quotas of most of these towns – from twofold to as much as a hundredfold between c.1077 and the thirteenth century – suggest the likelihood of heightened commercial activity in the delta. Admittedly, some market towns in the delta saw as much as a 20 percent decline in their commercial tax quota over this time. Yet for the vast majority of these towns, if only because of the proximity of the Southern Sung capital in Hang-chou and the need to feed and clothe their populace, the commercial tax quota rose, and presumably their commercial activity expanded. By the end of the Southern Sung, twelve of the delta's 106 market towns had a commercial tax quota of over 10,000 *kuan*, eight of these twelve had a commercial tax quota of over 30,000 *kuan*, and two of them had a commercial tax quota of over 100,000 *kuan* – all this when the quota of Su-chou's prefectural seat in c.1077 had been a mere 51,034 *kuan*. Inflation played a role in these quota rises, but note that the “more than tenfold” increase in Hu-chou's commercial tax quota, from 77,688 *kuan* in c.1077, was accompanied by a fall in its commercial tax rate from 5 percent to 2 percent by the start of the thirteenth century: “Are not the wealth of its people and objects and the number of its travelling and residential merchants then comparable to before?”²²¹ Equally telling was a three-and-a-half-fold increase over just the first six decades of the thirteenth century in the commercial tax quota of the Chiang-k'ou customs station that operated in Chen-chiang commandery at the juncture of the Grand Canal and the Yangtze River on its southern bank.²²²

Moreover, some market towns in Liang-che, in line with a long-term trend already noticed in the c.1077 figures, had higher commercial tax quotas, and thus greater estimated trading activity, than their county towns. For instance, the commercial tax quota for the county seat of Wu-k'ang in Hu-chou declined by over a fifth from c.1077 to 1220, just at the time when this upland county's farming households increasingly took up the practice of sericulture and when its commercial tax quota fell below that of some of its market towns.²²³

²²⁰ Shiba, *Sōdai shōgyōshi kenkyū*, pp. 337–90; and Ch'en, *Chiang-nan nung-ts'un ch'eng-shih-bua li-shih yen-chiu*, p. 110.

²²¹ T'an, *Chia-tai Wu-hsing chib* 8, pp. 4723–4.

²²² Yü Hsi-lu, *Chih-shun Chen-chiang chib* (1332; Nanking, 1990) 6, p. 254.

²²³ SHY (1965) *shih-buo* 18, p. 30a–b;

Concurrently, these market towns' merchandise became more varied and their customer base more diverse and complex. Most towns in Liang-che focused on providing services for local landlords and peasants, who brought into the town surplus products to be sold and then distributed elsewhere in the delta and empire. In some towns, trade expanded through concentration on the production and sale of one main product, such as salt, liquor, mats, drugs, pottery, paper, lumber, fish, or lacquer ware. Yet even these towns dealt with other products, if only because the outside traders who bought these goods brought other goods to sell in return. In addition, these merchants and other visitors to these market towns might come from far away, their journey not being the morning's excursion by boat from a nearby village that some scholars assume constituted the trade in these towns. Fu-shan in Ch'ang-shu county in Su-chou prefecture functioned as a religious center, drawing Buddhist pilgrims from all along the coastline of central and south China. Others, be they inland like Ch'ing-lung or coastal like modern Shanghai and Kan-shui chen, were regularly visited by long-distance merchants, both domestic and foreign. Furthermore, the long reach of these market towns' client base was emulated by some regular markets in Liang-che-hsi. For instance, in 1220 the market around the Huang-yao tax station in eastern Su-chou functioned as the marketing center for thirteen subsidiary rural markets; it also attracted the boats of large merchants from all the coastal prefectures of Liang-che-tung as well as from faraway Fu-chien and Kuang-nan-tung.²²⁴

These market towns also competed with larger urban centers by providing facilities once associated only with county and prefectural seats. They acquired schools, teahouses, wineshops, temples, shrines, and venues for plays and other kinds of entertainment, and even provided song and music performances that lasted until the early hours of the morning. Proximity to a large city like Hang-chou explains the presence of such buildings and pleasures in some market towns, but not in all. In the mid-thirteenth century, a coastal market town like Kan-shui chen and its immediate surroundings relied instead on a far wider marketing area to support its facilities and population of some 5,000 households. It was visited by traders from all over East Asia and had in its suburbs a lake popular enough with tourists to be called "Little West Lake" after the celebrated lake alongside Hang-chou. As its trade and population had expanded since the start of the Southern Sung, the government initiated a series of administrative changes, with the doubling of its appointed officials from the year 1220. One official, as before, concentrated on the salt monopoly business, while the new one dealt with additional trade and government business. From 1246 the town even had a maritime trade commissioner

²²⁴ SHY (1965) *shih-huo* 18, p. 29b.

(*shih-po shih*), another sign of at least greater government interest in taxing trade. In all, over the first two-thirds of the thirteenth century it acquired government offices, a naval base, a government storehold for the liquor monopoly, and a government school with a painting of Confucius (551-479 BC). Nothing but scale seems to separate this town from a county seat; even its omission of a city wall was a shortcoming shared by at least six of the delta's county seats at this time.²²⁵

Yet Kan-shui chen market town was more than a thriving settlement for trade and government tax collection or a leisurely locale with gardens for gentry residence. It was a religious center, containing at least eleven Buddhist temples and popular shrines. The presence of several old and large temples in the market area suggests the antiquity of their establishment and perhaps even their ownership of the market land itself; up to 1219 the government, lacking any fixed address for its offices, had either borrowed the buildings of commoners or housed its staff and offices in a Buddhist temple. This town also appears to have been a site of some production, in that by the mid-thirteenth century its list of local products, in addition to salt, included plain silk and silk floss. Thus some market towns in the delta functioned not merely as sites of exchange; they had the additional economic function of manufacture, thereby providing jobs for artisans and goods for merchants who traveled there from far and near.

Commercial goods

Textiles

During the last century of Southern Sung rule similar signs of greater commercialization were evident in the practice of sericulture in both the uplands and the lowlands of the delta. In the year 1212, local agricultural production provided only half the food required by peasant households in the mountainous county of Fu-yang in Hang-chou prefecture. Much of the rest came from the locals' practice of sericulture:

The land is cramped and the people many, the soil is thin and the [rice] harvest slim. If we count up [the harvest] for the entire county, it provides only for half the year. What people eat for [the other] half of the year relies on purchases from merchants. In the winter they do not till their fields, but invariably contend over protecting a single branch of a mulberry tree . . . Therefore, the people of this region place an emphasis on fertilizing mulberry trees and make light of fertilizing their fields.²²⁶

²²⁵ Ch'ang T'ang, *Kan-shui chih* (1230; *T'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* ed.) 1, pp. 1b-2a; 3, p. 6a; 4, pp. 8a-9a, and 5, p. 11a-b.

²²⁶ Ch'eng Pi, *Ming-shui hsien-sheng chi* (*Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen* ed.) 19, p. 6a-b.

From the last third of the twelfth century, many lowland villagers took up sericulture to produce leaves, thread, and cloth for the market. In Chien-k'ang prefecture they produced so much simple silk that by 1198 its price had fallen markedly, even in an era of considerable inflation. By the mid-thirteenth century, this prefecture's residents were engaged in all stages of silk production: "They are diligent with silkworms and mulberry trees, in the summer spinning silk thread and in the winter weaving silk goods." At roughly the same time the residents of Lai-su rural district in its Chü-jung county were even reported to weave coarse silk cloth for their livelihood.²²⁷

Furthermore, at the opposite end of the delta, silk spinning and weaving were taken up in at least a few lowland towns, such as P'u-yüan and Nan-hsün. The founder of P'u-yüan had migrated to the lower Yangtze delta in the 1130s from Shantung, bringing with him his native area's skills at silk weaving. By the end of the Southern Sung the P'u family reportedly had as many as a thousand servants (probably hired laborers) employed in cultivating mulberry trees, reeling, and weaving.²²⁸ Nan-hsün, located near the south bank of Lake T'ai, had been just a small village in the Northern Sung. As late as the early thirteenth century, it was described as "just a village, but its wealth from cultivation and mulberry trees is the greatest in Liang-che-hsi. Its land is rich and products abundant, its people trustworthy and customs rich. It is a place where traveling and resident merchants meet up." By the mid-thirteenth century its level of production and trade in silk thread won it official designation as a market town.²²⁹ Not surprisingly, in the nearby capital city, Hang-chou, one-fifth of the specialized shops mentioned in a mid-thirteenth-century survey dealt in silk products.

Elsewhere in the Southern Sung empire not many places replicated these lowland villages' and towns' successful practice of sericulture. Admittedly, some places limited their involvement to just one stage. For instance, in the coastal prefecture of Wen-chou the soil was considered unsuitable for growing mulberry trees, and so locals instead wove silk cloth with imports of silk yarn from Hu-chou and Yen-chou, a poor prefecture in the mountains south of Hang-chou. Yet ordinary people elsewhere, even though they enjoyed wearing silk and at times used it to pay some taxes, often hesitated to produce it. They found it less risky to sow grain for their table, to grow ramie and then spin and weave its fibers for their clothes, to produce an agricultural product for the market (e.g. beans, fruit, vegetables, oils), and, when necessary, to buy silk

²²⁷ Fang Hui, *T'ung-chiang hsü chi* (*Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen* ed.) 14, p. 26a-b.

²²⁸ Richard von Glahn, "Towns and temples: Urban growth and decline in the Yangzi delta, 1100-1400," in *The Sung-Yüan-Ming transition in Chinese history*, ed. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, MA, 2003), p. 203.

²²⁹ Ch'en, *Chiang-nan nung-t's'un ch'eng-shih-hua li-shih yen-chiu*, p. 90.

cloth for their taxes. In Ming-chou the residents in the early thirteenth century had even less to do with sericulture, as they were described as "by custom not taking up work with silkworms and mulberry trees, with weaving and sewing, so that silk cloth cost more here than in other [Liang-che] prefectures."²³⁰ Farther down the southeast coast the soil in late thirteenth-century Fu-chien was judged unsuitable for the planting of mulberry trees; instead, it preferred the planting of sugarcane.²³¹ A century earlier a similar judgement had been passed on the soil of Kuang-nan-hsi, where the residents grew and wove ramie and hemp fibers.

Ceramics

The ceramic workshops and kilns in south China during the Southern Sung did not achieve technical breakthroughs of the importance attained by their counterparts in north China during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Yet their potting and firing practices include distinctive innovations that quickened the process of production and enabled an increase in the volume of production. For instance, some Southern Sung ceramic workshops used water wheels rather than human labor to crush porcelain stone. The turntables (or wheels) excavated in recent archaeological surveys are of such a number that they indicate advances not only in the division of labor (e.g. separate turntables appear to have been provided for throwing and for finishing pots before firing) but also in the level of production.²³²

The workshops themselves grew in size and stature, from relatively rudimentary thatched structures built out of irregular stones and discarded saggers during the Northern Sung to more neatly arranged, sometimes tiled, thirteenth-century buildings with foundations made of stone or brick and floors hardened with burnt clay. Some potters' dwellings even acquired lined floors and brick-laid paths leading to their doors. And, most distinctly, southern kilns tended to be multichambered structures which, as their name "dragon kiln" suggests, stretched up and along the slopes of hills. The heat from firewood burnt at the bottom of these kilns naturally rose upward, through as many as seventeen well-stoked chambers, to provide quick, cheap, and relatively even firing. As many as 25,000 to 30,000 pots might be fired in a single stacking within one of these large kilns. In short, what had been a collection of small-scale cottage industries in south China's principal porcelain centers of Lung-ch'üan in Liang-che-tung, Ching-te-chen in Chiang-nan-hsi,

²³⁰ Fang Wan-li and Lo Chün, *Pao-ch'ing Ssu-ming chib*, in *Sung Yüan ti-fang chib ts'ung-shu* (Taipei, 1978) 6, p. 6a.

²³¹ Shiba, *Sōdai shōgyō*, pp. 148, 215-16. ²³² Kerr and Wood, *Ceramic technology*, pp. 439-40.

and Te-hua in Fu-chien during the eleventh century was transformed by the early thirteenth century into large numbers of commercial kilns. Even if many of their kilns were not big enough to achieve the peak figures of production estimated for some dragon kilns, they overall were collectively capable of achieving high levels of production. Favored by easy access to the far-ranging and usually calm inland waterways of south China, their porcelain won wide fame and markets at home and abroad. Appreciation of their beauty and utility extended across Eurasia, even as far away as Old Cairo (European courts saw their first pieces of Chinese porcelain only in the fourteenth century, about three-quarters of a millennium after potters in north China had learned how to make porcelain).

The transformation of the southern ceramic industry during the Southern Sung was most evident in Ching-te-chen. This Chiang-nan-tung market town had begun to make porcelain in the tenth century, and thanks to repeated foreign conquest of the northern kilns and the shift of imperial patronage to southern kilns it became the center of Chinese porcelain production from the twelfth century up to today. In fact, its methods of porcelain production would be seen to represent the mainstream practices of Chinese porcelain production from the Southern Sung onward.

In the latter half of the twelfth century, potters at over 300 kilns in Ching-te-chen produced a great variety of ceramics, which vied in quality with the white porcelain of Ting-chou in Ho-pei and the green-glazed celadon stoneware of Lung-ch'üan in Liang-che-tung. Some potters individually or collectively owned their kilns. Most, however, were not so fortunate, and so jointly rented others' kilns for large-scale firings. Yet other residents in Ching-te-chen ran their own kilns as businesses, where potters and other workers were hired to carry out large-scale pottery production. A firing for just one day and two nights could bake up to 30,000 pots.²³³

This market town, though it drew on nearby villages for some of its clay and laborers, was keenly aware that the great bulk of its customers lived far away, in other circuits and in other countries. Its best-quality ware may have ended up at the court in Hang-chou, yet its production was overwhelmingly for private regional markets differentiated by the clay type and the shape of the pots they favored. Whereas Liang-che-tung and Liang-che-hsi customers acquired pots made in the porcelain clay area north of the town, customers elsewhere in the empire purchased pots made in the market town itself. The shape of

²³³ Otagi Matsuo, "Riu Xin'en shi no 'Shō Ki "Tōki" chosaku jidai koben – kenron Keitoku chin Nan Sō u Gendai jiki kōgei shijō kyū zeisei dō hōmen teki sai' o yomu," in his *Tōyō shigaku ronshū*, Volume 1: *Chūgoku tōshi sangyō shi* (Tōkyō, 1987), pp. 413–40, provides very useful annotation to Chiang Ch'i's essential account of Ching-te-chen in the Southern Sung.

the pots also was varied to suit the taste of customers in south China's three distinct regional markets for porcelain – Szechwan, Kuang-nan, Ching-hu-pei, and Ching-hu-nan in the southwest; Chiang-nan-hsi, Chiang-nan-tung, Liang-che, and Fu-chien in the southeast; and the Liang-Huai circuits in the east central area.

By the 1230s, however, the kilns at Ching-te-chen were, like many other enterprises in the middle Yangtze valley, suffering serious financial troubles. Between 80 and 90 percent of the big merchants reported failure in their sales, and the number of kilns in operation had declined. This collapse was attributed, according to one local source, to heavy taxes, irregular levies, greedy officials, intrusive yamen underlings, crafty brokers, and competition from kilns elsewhere in south China.²³⁴ To these seemingly perennial factors in Chinese history should probably be added merchants' concerns about impending Mongol advances into south China. In the wake of reports from the north and west of the imminence of a Mongol onslaught, it is hard to believe that merchants were eager to make sizable new investments from the late 1220s onwards.

Along the southeast coast, the ceramic industry suffered similar, if less destructive, setbacks at roughly the same time. In southern Fu-chien, ceramic production had enjoyed a long-term boom ever since 1087, when the government's establishment of a maritime trade superintendency (*shih-po t'i-chü ssu*) in Ch'üan-chou had permitted Chinese merchants to head overseas directly from this port rather than from Canton in Kuang-nan-tung circuit. As a result of this southern Fu-chien expansion into foreign trade, the next century and a half saw up to 170 dragon kilns come into operation in over eighteen sizable towns and other settlements in six coastal counties around Ch'üan-chou. Kilns for celadon and dark-colored earthenware tended to be located in the coastal lowlands, while kilns for white ware and bluish-white ware were in the coastal uplands. The largest of these kilns was over fifty-seven meters long and capable of baking from 10,000 to 30,000 pieces of ceramic in each firing (a modern study has estimated that large kilns could be used for fifteen firings every year).²³⁵

All these figures suggest levels of production far in excess of local and even regional demand. Speculation over their intended or eventual destination has inevitably turned to consider foreign locations, and this hypothesis has been repeatedly confirmed by a great number of overseas archaeological surveys reporting the discovery of Ch'üan-chou pots and shards in places as separated from one another as Japan, the Philippines (Ma-i), Indonesia, and

²³⁴ Otagi Matsuo, "Riu Xin'en shi no 'Shō Ki "Tōki" chosaku jidai koben'," pp. 413-40.

²³⁵ So, *Prosperity, region, and institutions in maritime China*, pp. 194, 363 n. 47.

the Persian Gulf.²³⁶ This expansion of the maritime “ceramics road” during the twelfth century paved the way for the steady flow of a greater number of Chinese products into Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean. And so, despite the setbacks in the southern Fu-chien economy during the thirteenth century, twenty-seven Chinese goods, including celadon from Lung-ch’üan and imitations from Ch’üan-chou, were traded in popular markets in Cambodia (Chen-la) in c.1300.

The final decades

By 1223, the date of the next collection of relatively reliable household figures for its circuits, the Southern Sung empire registered another million more households than it had in 1162. Its 1223 total of 12,680,901 households, and by extension 70 million individuals, represented an overall rise of 9 percent. Interestingly, most of this increase was achieved in the Yangtze valley circuits that had in the late twelfth century suffered serious agricultural crises. If these figures are reasonably accurate – and the matter is far from decided – the economy of these circuits, then, seems to have recovered early enough to register higher population levels; by contrast, Liang-che’s string of poor harvests was much more recent and its household registration arguably was less effective. In fact, Chiang-nan-hsi ended up with slightly more households than Liang-che, though its population density remained slightly lower. Fu-chien also saw a small increase in its household numbers, by fourteen percent in contrast to a lower figure for all of Kuang-nan.

This persistent growth in south China’s population may well have increased pressure on local resources but does not seem to signal a general deterioration in living standards and economic conditions. Such changes would come only in the last half-century of Southern Sung rule, five decades whose official records on population change and harvest results are few and highly problematic. After 1223, the next set of comprehensive provincial figures for south China dates from 1290, thirteen years after the fall of Hang-chou to Mongol forces. It shows a 3 percent drop from the 1223 total figure to 12,362,374 households, with sizable losses in Szechwan, Chiang-nan-hsi, Ching-hu-nan, Fu-chien, and Kuang-nan-tung not compensated for by rises in the figures for Liang-che, Chiang-nan-tung, distant Kuang-nan-hsi, and the four circuits north of the Yangtze. The two circuits with very strong increases were Liang-che, by half, and Chiang-nan-tung, by two-thirds, but their growth is quite likely

²³⁶ So, *Prosperity, region, and institutions in maritime China*, p. 192. For more on this subject, see Angela Schottenhammer’s chapter in this volume.

due as much to more rigorous registration procedures as to the influx of many refugees from parts of the Yangtze valley closer to the Mongol advance.

It is difficult, however, to accept these 1290 figures as a reliable indicator of the late Sung population level. The decline they show doubtless reflects the oft-noted deterioration in Sung government record-keeping in areas other than Liang-che and Chiang-nan-tung during these trying decades. At the same time the decline certainly does not reflect the extent of the Mongol massacres of the residents of Szechwan and much of China south of the Yangtze, since the figures were culled from the last surviving Sung registers compiled before the Mongol onslaught.²³⁷

As the Southern Sung government's record of harvests after 1223 is even more incomplete than its population figures, any account of economic conditions for the next half-century is forced to rely on more general accounts of economic conditions. Fortunately, the quality of these sources is considerably better, providing a wealth of commentary on a widespread economic decline and social disintegration. Whereas late twelfth-century writers on agricultural conditions tended to comment on regional differences, the writers in the last third of the Southern Sung tended to focus on diachronic differences that stressed economic decline.

Reports of worsening economic conditions were repeatedly made from the upper and middle Yangtze valley, especially after their extensive suffering from Mongol attacks. Szechwan, long known for its wealth and fertility, was described as being "far different from the days of complete prosperity. A stream of abuses have gone on, and it is hard to revive the people's strength."²³⁸ In its Li-chou and K'uei-chou circuits a great deal of potentially arable land remained untilled. The 1195 gazetteer for the far more settled and wealthy prefecture of Ch'eng-tu reported the absence of merchants from its towns and the emigration of great houses and wealthy people from its villages. In Shen-ch'üan county of Ch'eng-tu-fu circuit, the residents "formerly rented houses and fields and did not avoid being hired by others [to farm]. However, now [in the early thirteenth century], others compete in asking for them, and hereditary property can be regularly acquired [through purchase]."

Starting in 1234, the Mongol invasion devastated Szechwan even more thoroughly than the Jurchen had destroyed the Yangtze Valley a century earlier. In the view of one Yüan dynasty historian, less than 0.1 percent of western Szechwan's residents survived this Mongol onslaught. By 1236 the Mongol army had reportedly butchered three-quarters of the population of western Szechwan and ravaged most of its cities. Suspecting that the residents

²³⁷ Uemura Tadashi, *Gendai Kōnan seiji shakai shi kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1997), pp. 68-97.

²³⁸ Chia Ta-ch'üan, *Sung-tai Ssu-ch'uan ching-chi su-lun* (Ch'eng tu, 1985), pp. 252-72.

of Ch'eng-tu would never submit to its rule, it set this city ablaze, so that "none of the common people inside could avoid the fire."²³⁹ Subsequently, by one exaggerated but telling calculation, 1.4 million corpses were found within the city's wall; those outside it were never counted. And those who escaped this massacre were taken off to Yung-hsing-chün as slaves in captivity. Or they fled in desperation southward and eastward, where they reported that thousands of miles of Szechwan's fertile countryside had been purged of all signs of human life.

The impact of these troubles on the middle Yangtze valley was both extensive and pervasive, and not just because of the throngs of Szechwanese refugees in its cities. Its economic troubles in the late twelfth century persisted into the mid-thirteenth century. In Chiang-nan-hsi officials wrote of "a shift in the land's energy" and "the poverty of the kingdom." Many Chi-chou residents left their homes, and "the official families only thought of what they had stored up."²⁴⁰ By the 1260s and early 1270s, much of Fu-chou's land had returned to wasteland and Ning-kuo prefecture reported a two-decade-long depression: "The rivers have floods, the polder fields no harvests, the tax registers are scattered, the grain taxes are lost, not a mouth of grain is in storage... and the markets are desolate, without a single copper coin from trade."²⁴¹

Even in the relatively sheltered southeast, many commentators noticed the change, with Fang Yüeh (1199–1262) observing, "The southeast of today is not like the southeast of my ancestors."²⁴² For a persistent strain of melancholy, however, none of these accounts matches the dirge of Tu Fan (1182–1245) on Hang-chou's decline. When Tu lived in Hang-chou during the Chia-ting reign era (1208–24), the city was still considered to be bustling and its material culture rich and beautiful. But some were already telling Tu that the city had declined from the Ch'un-hsi reign era (1174–89). Come the 1230s, Hang-chou struck Tu himself as desolate, a far cry from its lively prosperity in the Chia-ting era. Yet when he returned to Hang-chou in 1240, "what I could see was not even the Hang-chou [I had known] in the Tuan-p'ing era (1234–6)."²⁴³

This downturn is partly attributable to colder weather in Hang-chou between 1221 and 1260. The latest spring snowfall for these four decades was, in turn, May 15, May 16, March 8, and April 11, thereby shortening the season for multiple cropping and reducing the size of grain harvests in

²³⁹ Fu Tseng-hsiang, *Sung-tai Shu-wen chi-tsun* (Hong Kong, 1971), Volume 2, 84, p. 18a.

²⁴⁰ Ou-yang Shou-tao, *Sun-chai wen-chi* (*Ssu-k'ü ch'üan-shu chen-pen* ed.) 6, p. 4a–b.

²⁴¹ Huang Chen, *Huang-shih jih-ch'ao* (*Ssu-k'ü ch'üan-shu chen-pen* ed.) 78, pp. 48b, 50b; and Tu Fan, *Ch'ing-hsien chi* (*Ssu-k'ü ch'üan-shu chen-pen* ed.) 8, p. 11b.

²⁴² Fang Yüeh, *Ch'iu-ya chi* (*Ssu-k'ü ch'üan-shu chen-pen* ed.) 18, p. 10b.

²⁴³ Tu, *Ch'ing-hsien chi* 10, p. 11a; and Pi, *Hsü Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* 169, pp. 4615–16.

Hang-chou, Liang-che-hsi circuit, and quite possibly other parts of southeast China. Not surprisingly, serious food shortages were reported for the capital and other parts of Liang-che-hsi in at least four years: 1224, 1228, 1240 (cannibalism was reported in a nearby harbor town), and 1265.

The deteriorating weather may also help to explain the economic downturn in other areas as well. In coastal Liang-che-tung, T'ai-chou by the mid-thirteenth century no longer enjoyed the surplus rice crops it had harvested in the first two decades of the century.²⁴⁴ Neighboring Wen-chou's economy also declined, with its villagers greatly troubled by the shortage of grain reserves in their storeholds.²⁴⁵ And in the Liang-che-tung interior, Wang Po (1197-1274) would comment, "The poverty of Chin-hua today cannot be spoken of together with the conditions of thirty years earlier... The rich families and giant houses of the past still had several harvests of grain in their storeholds, but now none has even two harvests of grain in their storage."²⁴⁶

Despite the loss of grain surpluses, Liang-che-hsi's registered population continued to rise, thanks in large part to the inflow of refugees from natural disasters and Mongol invasion elsewhere in the empire. In 1240, 1241, 1242, 1245, 1247, and 1258, these refugees flooded across the Yangtze from Huai-nan, and in the 1260s and 1270s they came downriver after the Sung's catastrophic defeats in Ching-hu-pei. The scale of this influx is suggested by household figures for the six Liang-che prefectures which have a pair of late Sung figures. Three prefectures, despite a slowing of the circuit's overall rate of increase since the twelfth century, still recorded a high rate of population growth: the capital prefecture, Hang-chou; the port prefecture of Ming-chou, which benefited from coastal and East Asian trade; and the prosperous prefecture of Su-chou. Aided by the establishment of the flourishing new county of Chia-ting in its eastern end at the mouth of the Yangtze, improved government administration in eastern Su-chou saw the number of its registered households nearly double during these hundred years,²⁴⁷ declining only, it seems, in the chaotic final years of the dynasty.

Down the southeast coast in Fu-chien and Kuang-nan-tung the evidence, though it may be less detailed than for the Yangtze Valley, points to worsening agricultural and commercial conditions. In 1223 floods damaged at least half of Chang-chou's fall crop, and the rest of Fu-chien suffered sizable losses in its wheat and rice harvests. A great flood inflicted much damage on crops in Shao-wu in 1247 (many are said to have died), while drought and famine returned

²⁴⁴ Ch'en Ch'i-ch'ing, *Ch'ih-ch'eng chih*, in *Sung Yüan ti-fang chih ts'ung-shu* (Taipei, 1978) 16, p. 1a-b.

²⁴⁵ Chao Ju-t'eng, *Yung-chai chi* (*Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen* ed.) 3, p. 19b.

²⁴⁶ Wang Po, *Lu-chai chi* (*Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* ed.) 7, p. 128.

²⁴⁷ Yü Te-lin, *P'ei-wei chai chi-wen* (*Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* ed.) 3, p. 26.

to Fu-chou in 1253. In the coastal port of Ch'üan-chou, trading conditions started to decline from the 1230s, as is recognized in a well-known report:

A long-established Fu-chien prefecture, Ch'üan-chou is said to be a place of prosperity. In recent years it has gradually been losing that former appraisal. Custom and government monopoly duties have become very oppressive, and southern treasures seldom come. Floods and droughts have occurred one after another, and the farmers' fields have slender harvests. Expenditures for the imperial clansmen living in this prefecture are double what they previously were. The prefectural treasury is running in the red. Silver can no longer be found in the mountains [where the silver mines were located], yet there is a tax quota that some years Ch'üan-chou has to contribute on behalf of other prefectures. Since rice growing in this place is very inadequate, [the local people] daily await the arrival of rich shipments from neighboring prefectures [in Liang-che, Kuang-nan-tung, and Kuang-nan-hsi].²⁴⁸

A poem of the 1260s indicates no end to these problems, with its sharp lament about Ch'üan-chou's precipitous decline to becoming "a region where people consume nothing but salt and rice."

Down the coast one possible beneficiary of Ch'üan-chou's grief was Canton, since many native Fu-chien merchants had reportedly shifted their trading activities there by the 1240s.²⁴⁹ Yet a local account of a newly built storehold in Canton city contrasts local conditions in the Ch'un-yu era (1241–52) unfavorably with the Chia-ting era: "From what I have seen over these thirty years the public and private mood has gone from affluence to constriction, in a situation that worsens by the year."²⁵⁰ Rice production, however, seems not to have declined greatly, in that Canton's rice price in 1276 was as little as a tenth of Hang-chou's.

If, then, a considerable body of evidence from the middle quarters of the thirteenth century points to economic deterioration at a time of dynastic decline, these decades would also see the culmination of a prolonged redistribution of China's population from the heights of T'ang dynasty rule. Between 742 and c. 1080 China's registered population had doubled. But virtually all of this increase had occurred in the south. This long-term trend, which strengthened after the capture of north China by the Jurchen in 1126 and then by the Mongols in 1234, can be roughly quantified. In 609 the four key northern provinces of Sui dynasty China had held 73 percent of the empire's populace. In 742 their share was down to 53 percent, by c. 1080 it was 25 percent, and in 1290 it was 20 percent.

Meanwhile, the concurrent population growth in south China became even more unevenly distributed in the late thirteenth century than it had been in

²⁴⁸ Chen, *Hsi-shan hsien-sheng wen-chung wen-chi* 17, p. 9a–b.

²⁴⁹ Liu K'o-chuang, *Hou-ts'un hsien-sheng ta ch'üan-chi* (*Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* ed.) 12, p. 8a.

²⁵⁰ Li Mao-ying, *Wen-ch'i chi* (*Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen* ed.) 1, p. 11a.

the late eleventh century. The empire-wide figures of 1290 show that Liang-che's prefectures then accounted for 27 percent of south China's registered households and for 32 percent of all households south of the Yangtze river (in contrast to, respectively, 18 percent and 24 percent in 1223). And since these 1290 figures do not reflect the greater loss of life suffered during the Mongol conquest by many other Yangtze valley circuits than Liang-che, they conceivably underestimate Liang-che's actual share of China's population by 1290.²⁵¹

The legacy of the Sung economy for later dynasties would thus be more than just a great number of innovative agricultural practices and effective commercial institutions. The Sung could boast of having an artisanate capable of astonishing the rest of the world with its craftsmanship and a peasantry in south China far more industrious and productive than agriculturists anywhere else in the world. Together with many merchants and some officials, they had created the most prosperous economy in the world at this time. Yet their success would come with a cost. Against the wishes of generations of Sung officials, Chinese economic growth had led to a serious imbalance in regional population, wealth, and economic development. The southeast and especially the lower Yangtze delta had become far more productive, wealthy, and populous than ever before. Yet elsewhere war, human error, and gross neglect of the environment had left a destructive mark on the land. First in the northern border circuits, especially in central Ho-pei, during the Northern Sung, and then in the extensive flatlands between the Huai river and Yangtze river during the Southern Sung, once densely settled areas lost much of their population and soil fertility due to the failures and demands of Sung military strategy. Their bruised landscape, deprived of its once superior productivity, reduced Sung and subsequent dynasties' tax revenue from agriculture. More significantly, their environmental destruction during Sung rule greatly hampered Ming and Ch'ing (1368–1912) efforts to revive their regional economy and facilitate the circulation of their goods in an expanding domestic market. This downside of the Sung's economic legacy, so often forgotten by modern scholars in the race to stress the Sung's successes, would weigh heavily on later officials anxious to curb the economic and political pre-eminence of the southeast and establish a more integrated imperial polity.

Yet arguably it was the ability of the Sung economy to develop against the official grain that helps to explain why, for over a century, its study has captured the imagination of historians. From its start it was looser, without the institutional structures set up by the Yüan and Ming dynasties for artisans,

²⁵¹ Uemura, *Gendai Kōnan seiji shakai shi kenkyū*, p. 76; and Wu, *Liao Sung Chin Yüan shih-ch'i*, pp. 142–3, 255, and 357–8.

without the early Ming ban on brokering and private overseas trade, and without the early Ch'ing predominance of large lineages and other local institutions in the search for local resources and access to capital. If the Sung government was at the same time more dependent on revenue from commercial taxes than were any of these later dynasties, it simply reflected the common understanding that greater profits lay in commerce than in agriculture and that commercial growth was more a solution to the problems of governance than it was their cause. Consequently, its merchants, artisans, and peasants faced fewer non-economic hurdles in the pursuit of profit than did their predecessors and many of their successors. Not only did the Sung throne encourage the expansion of overseas trade for the benefit of its coffers, but also its own family members during the Southern Sung actively invested in and profited from such foreign trade. While later critics would blame the Sung's military setbacks on the relative looseness of its controls and social institutions, the dynasty suffered much less from domestic uprisings and disorders than did the Ming. In fact, its political and social looseness lay behind its successes as a more open, if fragile, economy. Chinese society in the Sung period can thus readily appear to us as quite sensitive to the pressures and uncertainties of the type of economy and world that we and increasingly the Chinese live in today. But that relative openness and looseness perhaps arguably made it vulnerable to foreign invasion, as China's governments have repeatedly had trouble balancing their wish for economic prosperity with their insistence on political stability.

CHAPTER 7

CHINA'S EMERGENCE AS A MARITIME POWER

Angela Schottenhammer

INTRODUCTION

Studies of “international,” supra-regional trade relations in ancient and middle-period China often give the impression that the Chinese were not really interested in foreign trade as a commercial undertaking and that all they would tolerate was a form of official tribute trade (*ch'ao-kung mao-i*). This picture is misleading. Upon closer examination it becomes evident that much more trade went on than official documents reveal. In the course of the T'ang (618–907), the Five Dynasties (907–60), and the Sung (960–1279), a steady increase in maritime trade resulted in the official policy and attitude towards trade becoming more and more positive and open. By late Sung times, China was a maritime power and an emporium of commodity exchange in the medieval Asian world.¹

Trade relations between China and peoples west of the Himalayas are well known because of the famous overland route, the Silk Road. As archaeological evidence reveals, commodity exchange along this route can be traced back at least to the sixth or seventh century BC.² Maritime trade contacts between China and countries overseas, on the other hand, emerged later, but can still be traced back at least to the Han dynasty (220 BC–AD 220).³ The numerous middlemen along the overland trading routes who took a large share of the profits probably stimulated some merchants to travel by sea after about

¹ An excellent account of China's rise as a sea power is Lo Jung-pang's posthumously published manuscript edited, and with commentary, by Bruce A. Elleman. Lo Jung-pang, *China as a sea power 1127–1368: A preliminary survey of the maritime expansion and naval exploits of the Chinese people during the Southern Song and Yuan periods*, ed. Bruce A. Elleman (Singapore, 2011).

² The designation of these old trade routes as the “silk route” is, of course, a modern one, first used by the famous German geographer and scholar Ferdinand von Richthofen (1833–1905).

³ From early times maritime space was, of course, used for fishery and coastal shipping. We must be aware of the fact that the south and southeast were not yet under firm Han Chinese control in the centuries BC and that many of the archaeological finds dated presumably to the Eastern Chou (770–256 BC), Ch'in (221–206 BC) and early Han dynasties cannot be taken as evidence for overseas relations on the part of those dynasties. Archaeologists have found, for example, some goods imported from Southeast Asia in ancient

the first or second century. At the beginning of the third century, the Chinese gradually began to explore the lands of the south more systematically in search of "strange and precious" products.⁴ Their envoys returned with luxury articles, such as gold, camphor, perfumes, and many other precious goods.⁵ Especially during the Sui dynasty (581–618), China's main interest in maritime trade with the Indian Ocean was the acquisition of Buddhist scriptures, relics, and emblems for the use of Buddhist temples. During the T'ang dynasty, Chinese trade with overseas countries underwent a remarkable expansion, but this happened mainly through the intermediacy of Persian and Arab merchants who reached China via Southeast Asia. Although China had early developed shipbuilding and established trading contacts with other peoples, until the tenth to eleventh centuries Chinese merchants rarely went to sea themselves and were, as a rule, relatively inactive in the maritime trade with Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean – at least as far as we can tell from the sources. This situation changed fundamentally in the course of the Sung and Yüan (1260–1368) dynasties, when the maritime trade of China reached unprecedented heights.⁶ The latter half of the T'ang and the early Sung saw a real

tombs at Han dynasty ports in China. See Kuang-hsi Chuang-tzu tzu-chih-ch'ü wen-wu k'ao-ku hsieh tso-tsu, "Kuang-hsi Ho-p'u Hsi Han mu-kuo mu," *K'ao-ku* 5 (1972), pp. 20–30; and Chu Chieh-ch'in, "Hantai Chung-kuo yü Tung-nan-ya ho Nan-ya hai-shang chiao-t'ung lu-hsien shih-t'an," *Hai-chiao-shih yen-chiu* 3 (1981), pp. 1–4. For a discussion of myth and reality of "China's" early overseas relations, see Angela Schottenhammer, "Schiffahrt und Überseebeziehungen bis ins 3. Jahrhundert: Ein Überblick," in *Han-Zeit: Festschrift für Hans Stumpfeldt aus Anlaß seines 65. Geburtstages*, ed. Michael Friedrich (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp. 599–621. For early overseas relations with Japan, see Wang Chen-p'ing, *Ambassadors from the islands of immortals: China-Japan relations in the Han-Tang period* (Ann Arbor and Honolulu, 2005); Wang Chen-p'ing, "Speaking with a forked tongue: Diplomatic correspondence between China and Japan, 238–608 A.D.," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114 No. 1 (January–March 1994), pp. 23–32.

⁴ Pan Ku, ed., *Han-shu* (Peking, 1997) 28, p. 1671; K'ang T'ai, *Wu-shih wai-kuo chuan*, in Li Fang et al., *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* (Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an ed.) 771, p. 5b; Yao Ssu-lien, *Liang-shu* (Peking, 1997) 54, pp. 784, 787, 799; Wei Cheng et al., eds. *Sui-shu* (Peking, 1995) 82, pp. 1831–9; Wang Gungwu, "The Nan-hai trade: A study of the early history of Chinese trade in the South China Sea," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 31 No. 2 (1958), pp. 1–135; see also Yü Ying-shih, "Han foreign relations," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 1: *The Ch'in and Han empires, 221 B.C.–220 A.D.*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Michael Loewe (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 451–7; Yü Ying-shih, *Trade and expansion in Han China* (Berkeley, 1967), pp. 172–87.

⁵ Edward H. Schafer, *The golden peaches of Samarkand: A study of T'ang exotics* (Berkeley, 1963).

⁶ For some relevant studies, see, among others, Paul Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 32 No. 2 (1959), pp. 1–140; Shiba Yoshinobu, "Sung foreign trade: Its scope and organization," in *China among equals: The Middle Kingdom and its neighbors, 10th–14th centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 89–115; D. S. Richards, ed., *Islam and the trade of Asia: A colloquium* (Oxford and Philadelphia, 1970); Oliver W. Wolters, *Early Indonesian commerce: A study of the origins of Srivijaya* (Ithaca, 1967); Paul Wheatley, *The golden Khersonese: Studies in the historical geography of the Malay peninsula before A.D. 1500* (Kuala Lumpur, 1961); Kenneth R. Hall, *Maritime trade and state development in early Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, 1985); K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and civilization in the Indian Ocean: An economic history from the rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge, 1985); George Fadlo Hourani, *Arab seafaring in the Indian Ocean in ancient and early*

switch from the traditional overland silk roads to newly emerging maritime trade routes, largely as a result of political instability in Central Asia and the withdrawal of the T'ang government from the western regions. At the same time, maritime trade was actively promoted by local Chinese rulers during the period of division of the Five Dynasties, and later by the Sung government. This promotion of maritime commerce and trade in general had far-reaching consequences for the further development of China's seaborne commerce and its economy. Of course, the system of international maritime trade was still not yet a highly sophisticated and global one, but it was substantially more complex in organization and greater in volume than anything the world had previously known.⁷ We should not underestimate the volume and extent of trade during the Sung period. The often-repeated claim that the "age of commerce" began only around the year 1400, a time when "the growth in demand for Southeast Asian products" appears to have risen "relatively suddenly" in Chinese as in Mediterranean markets,⁸ should therefore be placed in context.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

In the distant past, the Chinese empire was the political and cultural center of Asia and on all sides was surrounded by peoples with a somewhat lower level of cultural development and with loose political organizations. However, by the middle of the eighth century political and military problems in China flowing largely from the An Lu-shan (703–757) rebellion, together with the political development of surrounding states, had largely undermined that earlier order. Towards the end of the ninth century, the T'ang empire collapsed into some ten regional regimes, and various other states, such as the Tibetan kingdom

medieval times (Princeton, 1951); Donald Daniel Leslie, *Islam in traditional China: A short history to 1800* (Canberra, 1986); Ch'en Kao-hua and Wu T'ai, *Sung Yüan shih-ch'i te hai-wai mao-i* (Tientsin, 1981); Li Chin-ming and Liao Ta-k'o, *Chung-kuo ku-tai hai-wai mao-i-shih* (Nan-ning, 1995); Ch'üan Han-sheng, "Sung-tai Kuang-chou te kuo-nei-wai mao-i," in Ch'üan Han-sheng, *Chung-kuo ching-chi-shih yen-chiu*, 3 vols. (Hong Kong, 1976), Volume 2, pp. 85–158; Enoki Kazuo, "Some remarks on the country of Ta-ch'in as known to the Chinese under the Sung," *Asia Major*, new series 4 No. 1 (1954), pp. 1–19. For general studies on the modern Fu-chien and particularly the Ch'üan-chou maritime trade patterns, cf. Li Tung-hua, *Ch'üan-chou yü wo-kuo chung-ku te hai-shang chiao-t'ung* (Taipei, 1985); Hugh R. Clark, *Community, trade, and networks: Southern Fujian province from the third to the thirteenth century* (Cambridge, 1991); So Kee-Long (Su Chi-lang or Billy K. L. So), *Prosperity, region, and institutions in maritime China: The South Fukien pattern, 946–1368* (Cambridge, MA, 2000). Li Tung-hua (pp. 91–106) particularly treats the local (*chu-kuan* or "subjective") changes and developments in the Ch'üan-chou region and those taking place in the Southeast Asian seas and the Indian Ocean in general and independently from the local developments in Fu-chien (*k'o-kuan* or "objective").

⁷ Cf. Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European hegemony: The world system A.D. 1250–1350* (New York and Oxford, 1989), p. 353.

⁸ Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the age of commerce, 1450–1680, Volume 2: Expansion and crisis* (New Haven and London, 1993), p. 15.

(seventh–ninth centuries) and the Uighur empire (744–840) in North and East Asia, fell apart.⁹ Japan's central authority also began to break down. In Korea, the Silla kingdom (57 BC–AD 935) split into three regional warlord states, and in Manchuria the Po-hai kingdom (698–926) gradually collapsed. In 907, the Khitan founded their Liao dynasty (907–1125), which lasted until 1125. In 926, they absorbed the Po-hai state and repeatedly invaded Chinese territory. Gradually, also, the Jurchen people rose in the northeast, and would later found their Chin empire (1115–1234), which conquered and incorporated large portions of Sung China.

It is against this background of political instability in Central, North, and East Asia, and last but not least in China itself, that we see a gradual shift of trade routes from traditional overland routes to maritime routes. To a great extent the active promotion of maritime trade by local rulers and by the Sung government during the tenth century also has to be seen in this historical context. Maritime trade not only supplied the social and ruling elites with fine and rare luxury articles that were otherwise unavailable in China, but it was also used as a source of income to fill state coffers. During a time when China was split among competing dynasties and kingdoms, some rulers of states located in coastal areas, such as the state of Min (909–45), and later the independent rulers of the Ch'üan-chou region (945–78) in Fu-chien, or the rulers of the Southern Han dynasty (917–71) in Kuang-tung, discovered maritime trade to be a way to guarantee the economic underpinning of their regimes, including the satisfaction of their own personal consumer demands. Later, during the course of the Sung dynasty, this financial aspect became ever more important due to the increasing costs of defense against the Khitan Liao, the Jurchen Chin, and, near the end of the Sung dynasty, the Mongols.

SEA ROUTES AND MARITIME ACCOUNTS

During the T'ang dynasty, overseas trade and navigation in Northeast Asia was mainly in the hands of the Koreans, especially after the destruction of the kingdoms of Paekche (18 BC–AD 660) and Koguryŏ (37 BC–AD 668) by Silla during the 660s. Up to the middle of the ninth century, Silla's foreign trade was basically carried on as official tribute trade; only after that did private

⁹ The Uighurs abandoned their homeland in Mongolia and settled in eastern Sinkiang, Turfan, Hami, and the Kansu corridor. The tribal states of the Khitan and the Hsi Hsia (Tanguts) living in the north of modern Ho-pei and in western Liao-ning, formally vassals of the Uighurs, transferred their loyalty to the T'ang court. For a description of the last years of the T'ang dynasty, cf. Robert Somers, "The end of T'ang," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 3, Part 1: *Sui and T'ang China*, 589–906, ed. Denis C. Twitchett (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 727–62.

trading activities begin to flourish. Korean vessels normally crossed the Yellow Sea to the Shantung peninsula. As a result of the increase of private trade, special Korean settlements called Silla Quarters (*Silla fang*) emerged in modern Shantung and Kiangsu. Until the late seventh century, when Japan and Silla became enemies, this route was usually also taken by the Japanese ships sailing from Hizen. In the eighth century, Japanese ships, avoiding Silla, took the direct route from Nagasaki to the estuaries of the Huai or Yangtze rivers or even to Hang-chou Bay. But as this sea route was relatively dangerous, Japanese pilgrims and emissaries often preferred to travel to China on better-navigated Korean vessels sailing along the Shantung peninsula. Some merchant vessels were at that time also navigated by sailors from the Manchurian state of Parhae (Po-hai), and there were government inns for the accommodation of the ambassadors of Po-hai as well those from Silla at Teng-chou (modern P'eng-lai) in Ching-hsi-nan.¹⁰

Most of China's maritime trade, however, was from the south, conducted through the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean and governed by the periodic shifts of the monsoon winds. Ships leaving from Kuang-chou (Canton) sailed before the northeast monsoon, leaving in late autumn or winter, and returned with the southwest monsoons in late spring or summer. The northeast monsoon was also the wind of departure from the great ports of the Persian Gulf. Persian and Arab ships left their home ports in September or October, using the winter monsoons to carry them across the Indian Ocean, and then in June caught the stormy southwest monsoons which carried them northward from the Malay peninsula to their destinations in south and southeast China. An active maritime trade between China and mainland Southeast Asia is documented for the T'ang dynasty both in Chinese records and in Arab geographical accounts, which give a similar description for the Sung period. During the T'ang, Five Dynasties, and early Sung this trade was dominated by Arab merchants, who, in "the palmy days of the Abbasid caliphate, began to turn their energies to the exploitation of Eastern markets."¹¹ The eighth to eleventh centuries are generally designated the period of expansion of Muslim commerce on all main routes of the Indian Ocean.¹² Numerous trading posts and colonies emerged along the coasts and river estuaries to sustain the newly

¹⁰ Edwin O. Reischauer, *Ennin's travels in T'ang China* (New York, 1955), pp. 143, 277-81; Edwin O. Reischauer, "Notes on T'ang dynasty sea routes," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic studies* 5 No. 2 (December 1940), pp. 142-64; Robert Borgen, "The Japanese mission to China, 801-806," *Monumenta Nipponica* 37 No. 1 (Spring 1982), pp. 1-28; and Charlotte von Verschuer, "Japan's foreign relations 600-1200 A.D.: A translation from Zenrin Kokuhoki," *Monumenta Nipponica* 54 No. 1 (Spring 1999), pp. 1-39.

¹¹ Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," p. 20.

¹² Cf. André Wink, *Al-Hind: The making of the Indo-Islamic world*, Volume 1: *Early medieval India and the expansion of Islam, 7th to 11th centuries* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne, 1996).

established networks. The first Persian and Arab overseas traders are supposed to have reached Southeast Asia during the sixth or seventh century and China probably around the late seventh century.

Trade routes connecting China's south and southeast coast directly to the Indian Ocean littoral existed by the Han dynasty at the latest,¹³ when Indo-Scythian merchants reached Chiao-chih (Tongkin, modern Hanoi), which was the transshipment center in early maritime trade in Southeast Asia. A shift from Chiao-chih to Kuang-chou appeared around the period between the years 263 and 280, when military clashes in the regions brought foreign merchants to Kuang-chou instead of Chiao-chih.¹⁴ From Kuang-chou, ships sailed to Vietnam (Yüeh-nan), Cambodia (Chen-la), the Malay peninsula, the Philippines, Java, Sumatra, India and West Asia, probably following the coastline.

By the eighth century, if not earlier, the city of Yang-chou, located at the junction of the Yangtze river and the Grand Canal (*Ta yüin-ho*), emerged as a major center of the South Seas trade, with a large settlement of Arab, Indian and Korean merchants. Archaeological investigations along the Isthmus of Kra (between the Gulf of Thailand and the Bay of Bengal), for example, have brought to light a fragmentary ninth-century Chinese ceramic bowl with an underglaze Arabic inscription, which has been interpreted as meaning *Allah al-Akbbār* ("Allah the greatest"). The piece found at Laem Pho (in Chaiya, Surat Thani, Thailand) was a product of the Ch'ang-sha (T'an-chou) T'ung-kuan kilns in modern Hu-nan, where T'ang bronze coins and significant quantities of Middle Eastern glass and glazed pottery have been excavated. A similar "Arabic" underglaze-decorated ceramic piece was found at Yang-chou in 1980 – a water bottle which was also attributed to the Ch'ang-sha T'ung-kuan kilns and dated to the late T'ang dynasty. Archaeological work at Yang-chou has revealed both numerous Islamic ceramic wares and Chinese ceramics with motifs copied from and influenced by Islamic wares and decorations, for example designs with date palms and grapes, destined for export to Muslim markets. As so many strange ceramic wares from Ch'ang-sha have been found in Yang-chou, this might suggest that such wares were mass produced in the late T'ang period at Ch'ang-sha expressly for export to foreign Muslim markets through the port of Yang-chou. The archaeological site in Tungtuk (in Ko Kno Khao, Phangan, South Thailand) has also yielded many Chinese and Islamic finds.¹⁵

¹³ Pan, *Han-shu* 28, p. 1671; Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, diplomacy, and trade: The realignment of Sino-Indian relations, 600–1400* (Honolulu, 2003), pp. 160–1.

¹⁴ Wang, "The Nanhai trade," pp. 1–15.

¹⁵ Ch'en Ta-sheng, "Chinese Islamic influence on archaeological finds in South Asia," in *South East Asia and China: Art, interaction and commerce*, ed. Rosemary Scott and John Guy (London, 1995), pp. 55–63.

Arab authors provide important descriptions of maritime trade relations with China during the eighth to tenth centuries. For example, al-Ma'sūdī's (896–956) *Murāj al-dhabab* (*Meadows of gold and mines of gems*) and *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa'l-isrāf* (*The book of notification and verification*) and the geographer Ibn Khurdādhbih's (c.820–912) *Kitāb al-Masālik wa'l-mamālik* (*The book of roads and kingdoms*) show a contemporary knowledge of the trade routes by sea to India and East Asia as far as Korea.¹⁶ Another early work, which contains valuable information on relations with Iran, is the *Yu-yang tsa-tsu* (*Miscellany of Yu-yang mountains*) by Tuan Ch'eng-shih (803–63).¹⁷ Arab maritime accounts, such as the *Akkbār al-Sīn wa-l-Hind* (*Notes on China and India*),¹⁸ give detailed descriptions of Arab settlements in China. According to a tenth-century Arab source, in 878 (879, according to his biography), 120,000 foreign merchants (Muslims, Jews, Christians, and Magians) were killed in a massacre by the troops of the Chinese rebel Huang Ch'ao (d. 884),¹⁹ an assertion not corroborated by Chinese sources.²⁰ A similar fate also overtook cities with large settlements of foreign traders.²¹ For some time, this virtually stopped all direct

¹⁶ For further information, cf. Gerald Randall Tibbetts, "Early Muslim traders in South-East Asia," in *A study of Arabic texts containing material on Southeast Asia* (London, 1979), pp. 1–45. See also Joseph Toussaint Reinaud, *Relations des voyages faits par les Arabes et les Persans dans l'Inde et à la Chine au IXe siècle de l'ère chrétienne*, Tome 1 (Paris, 1895); Ahmad ibn M-ājīd al-Sa'dī, *Kitāb al-faw-ā'id fī usūl al-bahr wa'l-qawā'id* (fifteenth century), trans. Gerald Randall Tibbetts as *Arab navigation in the Indian Ocean before the coming of the Portuguese: Being a translation of Kitāb al-Fawā'id fī usūl al-bahr wa'l-qawā'id of Ahmad b. Mājīd al-Najdī, together with an introduction on the history of Arab navigation, notes on navigational techniques and on the topography of the Indian Ocean, and a glossary of navigational terms* (London, 1971). The *Akkbār al-Sīn wa-l-Hind* gives a similar account of sea-trading as Ibn Khurdādhbih and quotes a certain Sulaimān al-Tājir (the Merchant), who may really have been an early navigator. Jean Sauvaget, ed., *Akkbār al-Sīn wa-l-Hind* (851; Paris, 1948).

¹⁷ Tuan Ch'eng-shih, *Yu-yang tsa-tsu* (*Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* ed.) 16, for example, contains several entries on commodities said to originate in Persia (Po-ssu).

¹⁸ This date was given by Abu Zaid, the author of the *Silsilat al-tawārikh* (*Travels in Asia*) written in the tenth century, when he edited the *Akkbār al-Sīn wa-l-Hind*.

¹⁹ Howard S. Levy, *Biography of Huang Ch'ao* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1955), pp. 113 and 117, compares Chinese and Arab sources; al Masūdi spoke even of 200,000 Moslems, Christians, Jews and Magians who were killed or drowned (p. 121). See also Tibbetts, "Early Muslim traders in South-East Asia." In this volume, Tibbetts introduces historical Arab sources and accounts containing the contemporary geographical knowledge of the Arabs on the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia, and East Asia. Joseph Toussaint Reinaud, ed. and trans., *Fragments arabes et persans inédits relatifs à l'Inde, antérieurement au XIe siècle de l'ère chrétienne* (Arab text and original French translation by Reinaud) (Paris, 1845). Collected and compiled by Joseph-Toussaint Reinaud. Frankfurt am Main: Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, 1993; Reinaud, *Relations des voyages faits par les Arabes et les Persans dans l'Inde et à la Chine au IXe siècle de l'ère Chrétienne*, Tome 1; Claude Cahen, "Le commerce Musulman dans l'océan Indien au moyen âge," in *Sociétés et compagnies de commerce en Orient et dans l'océan Indien: Acte du Huitième colloque internationale d'histoire maritime en Beyrouth*, 1966, ed. Michel Mollat (Paris, 1970), pp. 179–93.

²⁰ See Ray Huang, *China: A macro history* (New York, 1997), p. 117.

²¹ Huang Ch'ao started his rebellion in the southwest of Shantung, pillaging the richest towns and then starting to attack townships on the Yellow River. "They then travelled round Anhwei and Chekiang,

trade between China and West Asia and merchants and sea captains from as far away as Oman and Sīrāf were ruined. After these massacres, numerous foreign merchants fled to other places in Southeast Asia, and Kalāh became the new entrepôt for the China trade.

Yet, relations with foreign traders were never completely severed, and maritime trade gradually recovered. At the end of the tenth century, cities such as Kuang-chou and Ch'üan-chou carried on direct trade with the Arabs, the Malay peninsula, Champa (Chan-ch'eng), Java (She-p'o), Borneo (Po-ni), Srīvijaya (San-fo-ch'i) in eastern Sumatra, and certain parts of the Philippine islands (Ma-i) in Southeast Asia. Merchants from these places came to China to trade aromatics, incense and scented woods (*hsiang-yao*), rhinoceros horn and ivory, corals, amber, pearls, steel (*pin-t'ieh*), turtle- and tortoiseshell, cornelians, giant clams (*ch'e-ch'ü*), crystals, foreign cotton fabrics, ebony, and sappan wood in exchange for gold, silver, strings of bronze cash, lead, tin, various silk fabrics, and porcelains.²²

Numerous Arabic inscriptions on tombstones (*mu-pei*) found at Ch'üan-chou (the earliest one dated AH 567, AD 1171) and in Ch'üan-chou's Ashab Mosque, first built in AH 400 (AD 1010), give testimony to the presence of Arab merchants in contemporary Ch'üan-chou. The stone inscriptions (*shih-k'o*) are mostly in Arabic, with some in Persian and Turkish. Some stone tablets are inscribed in Chinese, Arabic, and Persian script. The dates are given mostly according to the Islamic calendar (AH), with a few exceptions, where the dating follows both the Islamic and the Chinese lunar calendars.²³ As we know from the 1078 inscription of Kulottunga at Kuang-chou and the Tamil-Chinese bilingual inscription of Ch'üan-chou, which is dated to 1281, Indian settlements had also emerged in China by that time. Indian guilds, such as the Ayyavole, actively engaged in the maritime trade of the Indian Ocean region and Southeast Asia from the eleventh century.²⁴

Navigation in the waters south of Kuang-chou remained extremely difficult until Sung times. Sailors tried to avoid their hidden currents, sudden winds,

reaching Fu-chou and in 879 Kuang-chou, where they massacred the rich foreign merchants." Jacques Gernet, *A history of Chinese civilization* (Cambridge, 1996), 267.

²² Togto (T'o-T'o) et al., eds., *Sung-shih* (1346; Peking, 1990) (hereafter SS (1990)), 186, pp. 4558–9.

²³ Ch'en Ta-sheng, *Ch'üan-chou I-ssu-lan-chiao shih-k'o* (Yin-ch'uan and Fu-chou, 1984). This volume provides not only illustrations and the transcription of the Islamic inscriptions, but in addition to the Chinese translation and analysis also an English translation of the complete book. Another important Arab travel account of the mid-fourteenth century (c.1347) is that of Ibn Battūta (1325–54).

²⁴ John S. Guy, "Tamil merchant guilds and the Quanzhou trade," in *The emporium of the world: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000–1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 2000), pp. 293–4; see also Meera Abraham, *Two medieval merchant guilds of South India* (New Delhi, 1988).

sandbanks, rocks and reefs.²⁵ The section east and southeast of Hai-nan Island and the open ocean around the island, the so-called Ch'i-chou Sea, constituted a particular obstacle for trade and traffic between Southeast Asia and China.²⁶ As a consequence, ships preferred safer routes. For their trips south to Southeast Asia this basically meant that they followed the coastline from Kuang-chou further west through the so-called Ch'iung-chou Straits between the Lei-chou Peninsula and Hai-nan Island. This was the so-called "western route" (*hsi-hang lu*) that was also taken from ports further north in Kiangsu, Chekiang, or Fu-chien. From there ships then followed the Vietnamese coast further south, crossing the South China Sea – via Hai-nan, Vietnam, and the area of modern Singapore – and eventually entering the Indian Ocean (this route had many branches within Southeast Asia).²⁷

The "eastern route" (*tung-hang lu*) from Ch'üan-chou led to Luzon and connected Southeast China with the Philippines. Ships usually passed southwestern Taiwan, reached the Manila Bay, then Mindoro island, from where they continued either via Palawan to Sabah, Brunei, or other places on Borneo or through the Sulu Sea to other ports of the Philippines. A continuation of this route led into the Celebes Sea to the Sangihe islands, to Ternate, Tidore, Ambon and other spice regions in eastern Indonesia, ending somewhere close to the Banda islands and Timor.²⁸

The northern routes from Chinese ports to Korea and Japan originally followed coastlines closely. From Teng-chou in Shantung ships sailed along the Po-hai and Ta-lien Bay to the mouth of the Yalu river or from Kiangsu or Chekiang via Heuksan Island to the west coast of Korea. The route via the open sea was first officially taken in T'ang times. During Sung times ships usually sailed from the harbour of Ming-chou northeastward, mostly passing the Gotō islands to reach either Tanoura in Hizen province, modern Nagasaki,

²⁵ See, for example, Roderich Ptak, "Quanzhou: At the northern edge of a Southeast Asian 'Mediterranean'," in *The emporium of the world: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000–1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 2001), p. 404.

²⁶ Various shipwrecks have been found in these waters, some definitely from the Southern Sung. The most famous is perhaps the recently discovered Hua-kuang-chiao I (i.e. Hua-kuang Reef No. 1), located inside the Huaguang reef complex off the Hsi-sha Islands in the South China Sea. See, for example, Hai-nan-sheng po-wu-kuan, ed., *Orientation of the Sea. Ta hai te fang-hsiang: Hua-kuang-chiao i hao ch'ên-ch'uan t'e-chân* (Nanking, 2011).

²⁷ Angela Schottenhammer, "The sea as a barrier and contact zone: Maritime space and sea routes in traditional Chinese sources and books," in *The Perception of Maritime Space in Traditional Chinese Sources*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer and Roderich Ptak (Wiesbaden, 2005), pp. 3–13; see also the many publications of Roderich Ptak that discuss sea routes, for example *China, the Portuguese, and the Nanyang: Oceans and routes, regions and trade (c. 1000–1600)* (Aldershot, 2004); Roderich Ptak, "The northern trade route to the Spice Islands: South China Sea–Sulu Zone–North Moluccas (14th to early 16th century)," *Archipel* 43 (1992), pp. 27–56.

²⁸ See Ptak, "Quanzhou: At the northern edge of a Southeast Asian 'Mediterranean'," pp. 403–4.

and Hakata in Chikuzen province, or smaller ports in Higo province, basically all ports located on Kyūshū.²⁹

The most important source concerning China's maritime contacts and routes in the Nanhai region during the Han dynasty is provided by a much-quoted and much-discussed entry in the *Han-shu*. There is skepticism about the authenticity of the passage, as well as an assumption that it was not actually written by Pan Ku (32–92). But there can be little doubt that the entry provides a relatively authentic picture of China's maritime relations at that time. Contacts with places in Indochina, north Sumatra, Myanmar and south India are mentioned.³⁰

Following this entry in the *Han-shu* and comparing it with archaeological evidence along the coasts of Southeast Asia and India, we can surmise that ships in those times sailed from Ho-p'u or Hsü-wen³¹ along the modern Vietnamese coast southward to a polity called Funan (Phnam, southern Annam) in Chinese sources. Funan was the first important kingdom and an ancient commercial centre in Southeast Asia. As recent archaeological evidence, which includes Indian, Chinese and Roman goods,³² has shown, the ships obviously called at Oc Eo,³³ the port and trading center of Funan, located already in the Gulf of Thailand close to the modern border with

²⁹ The route via the open sea is described in Borgen, "The Japanese mission to China," pp. 9–10. See also Charlotte von Verschuer, *Across the perilous sea: Japanese trade with China and Korea from the seventh to the sixteenth centuries*, trans. Kristen Lee Hunter (Ithaca, NY, 2006), pp. 45–9.

³⁰ Pan, *Han-shu*, 28, p. 1671; for an English translation of the passage, see Yü Ying-shi, *Trade and expansion*, pp. 172–3; the passage is also translated in Wang Gungwu, "The Nan-hai trade," pp. 16–30; Wang Gungwu, *The Nanhai trade: Early Chinese trade in the South China Sea*, 2nd revised ed. (Singapore, 2003); see also Yü Ying-shi, "Han foreign relations."

³¹ It should be mentioned that these ports in western Kuang-tung were not important after the Han dynasty. Other sources suggest that they were inhabited mainly by non-Chinese people like the Yüeh. Certainly, they were established pearl-trading centres by that time, a fact that suggests that the early impulse to look for maritime routes to the south may have arisen from the search for pearls. See Wang Gungwu, "The Nan-hai Trade", p. 21.

³² See, for example, Yoshiaki Ishizawa, "Chinese chronicles of the 1st–5th century AD Funan, southern Cambodia," in *Southeast Asia and China: Art, interaction and commerce*, ed. Rosemary Scott and John Guy (London, 1995), pp. 11–31; Paul Pelliot, "Le Fou-nan," in *Bulletin de l'École française de l'extrême orient* 3 No. 57 (1903), pp. 248–303.

³³ The port itself is not mentioned in early Chinese sources that speak only generally of Fu-nan. The earliest more detailed description of this polity stems from the third century. In 260, K'ang T'ai received the order of the ruler of Wu, Sun Ch'üan (r. 222–52), to travel to Southeast Asia. He left a report about his travels, the *Wu-shih wai-kuo chuan* (*Description of foreign countries during the time of Wu*), parts of which have survived in later encyclopedias. An entry in the *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* by Li Fang (925–96) provides us with a brief passage of the *Wu-shih wai-kuo chuan*. Accordingly, at that time overseas junks existed that were equipped with seven sails. See Li Fang, *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan*, 771, p. 5b (*Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'ien*). This source also seems to be one of the first in which the Chinese character for ocean-going junk, *po*, appears. However, for the Chinese at least, the old coastal trade between the Yangtze estuary along the southeast Chinese coast up to Annam was much more important than this "Nan-hai" trade.

Cambodia. Oc Eo was connected with the coast by a system of canals.³⁴ From there ships travelled via the Gulf of Thailand to the east coast of the Isthmus of Kra on the Malay peninsula. Goods were unloaded and then transported on land, probably crossing the narrowest passage of the isthmus at Kra Buri in order to reach the west coast. From there ships sailed in the direction of the Gulf of Bengal and then further to the east coast of Sri Lanka, or they reached another south Indian port, Arikamedu, or another port along the coast of Coromandel.³⁵ The return voyage reversed this route, though the Malacca Strait was at times used instead of the Isthmus of Kra. Funan was an important stopover in the Indo-Iranian and Parthian sea trade of that time.

Chinese sources of the T'ang dynasty do not generally provide detailed information on maritime trade routes, and with the exception of the chapters devoted to foreign countries in the official histories very little information has been preserved concerning the extent of Chinese geographical knowledge in the eighth century. One of the few surviving sources is the *Huang-hua ssu-ta chi* by Chia Tan (729–805), which is mentioned and partly preserved in summary form in the *Hsin T'ang shu* (*New T'ang history*).³⁶ He describes the sea route from Kuang-chou, crossing many tiny rocks and islands to Southeast Asia, namely the Malay peninsula and eastern Sumatra, then to northwest Sumatra, the Nicobar islands and further to Sri Lanka, then following the Malabar coast and sailing further north along the Indian western coastline to finally enter the Persian Gulf.³⁷

³⁴ On the role of Oc Eo, a major city of Fu-nan, see also Pierre-Yves Manguin, "The archaeology of Funan in the Mekong river delta: The Oc Eo culture of Vietnam," in *Arts of ancient Vietnam: From river plain to open sea*, ed. N. Tingley (Houston, 2009), pp. 100–18; Eric Bourdonneau, "Réhabiliter le Funan: Oc Eo ou la première Angkor," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'extrême-orient* 94 (2007), pp. 111–57; or on the large network of canals of the city that actually required a functioning and centralized polity, see also Eric Bourdonneau, "The ancient canal system of the Mekong delta: Preliminary report," in *Fishbones and glittering emblems: Southeast Asia archaeology 2002*, ed. Anna Karlström and Anna Källén (Stockholm, 2003), pp. 257–70.

³⁵ Bernhard Dahm, "Handel und Herrschaft im Grenzbereich des Indischen Ozeans," in *Der Indische Ozean: Das afro-asiatische Mittelmeer als Kultur- und Wirtschaftsraum*, ed. Dietmar Rothermund and Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik (Vienna, 2004), p. 109.

³⁶ Ou-yang Hsiu et al., eds., *Hsin T'ang-shu* (1060; Peking, 1975) 58, p. 1506; a very brief summary is included in 43 *hsia*, pp. 1153–4. An English translation of the passage is provided by Friedrich Hirth and W. W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua: His work on the Chinese and Arab trade in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, entitled Chu-fan-chi* (St. Petersburg, 1911; repr. Amsterdam, 1966), pp. 10–14. See also Paul Pelliot, "Deux itinéraires de Chine en Inde à la fin du VIII^{ème} siècle," *Bulletin de l'École française d'extrême orient* IV (Hanoi, 1904), pp. 131–413. According to his biographers, Chia Tan had collected a considerable quantity of information on border regions and foreign countries from both historical records and reports by merchants who had visited foreign places, information that was also reflected in his *Hai-nei Hua-i fu* (785). Unfortunately neither the original nor later copies of this map have survived.

³⁷ An English translation of this description is included in Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua*, pp. 10–14.

Some new evidence has come to light by the discovery of a stone stele (*shen-tao pei*) of an unknown eunuch named Yang Liang-yao (736–806), which makes him (together with Tu Huan, who was captured by the Abbasids at the Battle of Talas and returned to China via ship in 761) one of the first two documented Chinese to cross the Indian Ocean.³⁸ The stele was excavated in 1984 at Hsiao-hu-yang village in the Yün-yang district, Ching-yang county, Yung-hsing-chün circuit, where it is now preserved in a local museum. According to this stele, Yang Liang-yao was sent to the court of the Abbasids (750–1258; *Hei-i Ta-shih* or “black-dressed Tadjik”) in 785 by Emperor Te-tsung (r. 780–805) and took the sea route from Kuang-chou, the description of which partly resembles Chia Tan’s. This has led to speculation that Chia Tan originally received his information from Yang Liang-yao.³⁹ Most probably, Yang was sent to the Abbasid court in order to convince the Arabs to proceed against and isolate the Tibetans, who at that time constituted a threat to China, having devastated the borderlands after not having received promised compensation (two border districts) for helping the T’ang suppress the revolt of Chu Tz’u (742–784) in 784.⁴⁰ This mission was probably the result of a recommendation by Te-tsung’s famous adviser, Li Mi (722–789), whose plans for dealing with the Tibetan threat were “pan-Asiatic in scale.”⁴¹

³⁸ Chang Shih-min, “Yang Liangyao: Chung-kuo tsui-tsao hang-hai hsia Hsi-yang te wai-chiao shih-chieh,” *Hsien-yang shih-fan hsiieh-yüan hsiieh-pao* 20 No. 3 (2005), pp. 1–8; also Chang Shih-min, “Chung-kuo ku-tai kuo tsui-tsao hang-hai hsia Hsi-yang te wai-chiao shih-chieh Yang Liang-yao,” in *T’ang-shih lun-ts’ung*, Volume 7 (Hsi-an, 1998), pp. 351–6; Jung Hsin-chiang, “New evidence on the history of Sino-Arabic relations: A study of Yang Liangyao’s embassy to the Abbasid Caliphate,” paper presented at the International Conference on Land and Maritime Communication and World Civilizations at Sun Yat-Sen University, Kwangtung, on December 4–5, 2011.

³⁹ Chang Shih-min, “Yang Liangyao”; and Jung Hsin-chiang, “New evidence on the history of Sino-Arabic relations.” Interesting in this context is the fact that a certain Lu P’i is mentioned as composer of the introduction to the stele. This Lu P’i occurs in another context, namely as the person having copied the *Stele for Pacifying Huai-hsi* (*P’ing Huai-hsi pei*), which had been rewritten by the famous minister Tuan Wen-ch’ang (733–835). Wen-ch’ang’s son, Ch’eng-shi (801/802–63), is author of the already mentioned *Yu-yang tsa-tsu*. Yang Liang-yao’s personal environment is also closely related with Han-lin scholars and eunuch circles.

⁴⁰ As a reward for their help with the suppression of this revolt in 784 they were promised land in northwest China, namely An-hsi and Pei-t’ing. Yang Liang-yao had served as an envoy to the Hsi-jung (Tibetans) at that time and asked the Tibetan troops to assist in repressing the revolt. On the recommendation of Li Mi (722–89), adviser to Emperor Te-tsung, however, the promised lands were not returned, as a consequence of which the Tibetan troops invaded China and devastated the borderlands. According to Jung Hsin-chiang, “It was just in the fourth month of 785, when the Sino-Tibetan relationship had broken down, and before the Tibetan invasion, that Yang Liangyao was sent as an envoy to the Abbasid Caliphate. The purpose of his embassy was probably not only to ensure that ‘The imperial tradition was made known to all according to the alien custom; the manner of the envoy conveyed its prestige to all,’ as stated in the stele, but also to ally the Abbasids and request them to join in combating the Tibetan Empire.” Paper presented in 2011 and 2012.

⁴¹ Michael T. Dalby, “Court politics in late T’ang times,” in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 3, Part 1: *Sui and T’ang China*, 589–906, ed. Denis C. Twitchett (Cambridge, 1979), p. 609.

The stele is the only evidence we still possess of this mission to the West; it is not recorded otherwise in T'ang historiography, or, as far as we know, in Arab works. Nevertheless, there is no reason to consider it a fabrication. The reason for the silence in other historical sources, I would argue, is that according to the Chinese view it was foreigners who sent missions to China and not vice versa. Officially at least China never needed to send missions abroad; it was the sovereign or master (*chu*) and not the vassal (*ch'en*). Accordingly, such a mission simply could not be mentioned in the official accounts, which were supposed to legitimize imperial rule. In addition, there were domestic political reasons, such as the general instability and the problems with both military governors and eunuch power, which restricted the position of the emperor. In a nutshell, the whole domestic political situation at that time would constitute an additional argument to make it plausible that such a mission was kept secret.⁴² But without more information we can only state that even though his mission had no detectable outcome, Yang Liang-yao was likely sent, by sea, to the Abbasid court.⁴³

The first Chinese account that includes a more comprehensive description of countries and peoples overseas is from the end of the Northern Sung, the *P'ing-chou k'o-t'an* by Chu Yü (c. 1075–after 1119) of 1119. This is followed by the *Kuei-hai yü-beng chih* by Fan Ch'eng-ta (1120–93) of 1175 and the *Ling-wai tai-ta* by Chou Ch'ü-fei (d. after 1178) of 1178.⁴⁴ One of the latest Sung works about foreign people and maritime trade is the *Chu-fan chih* by Chao Ju-kua (1170–1231).⁴⁵ Chao Ju-kua's preface tells us that he gathered his information by personally questioning foreigners, but it is quite evident that he also made use of the earlier Chinese literature known to him, such as the *Ling-wai tai-ta*. Chao Ju-kua himself was appointed Superintendent of Maritime Trade at the superintendency of maritime trade (cf. below) at Ch'üan-chou in 1224.⁴⁶

⁴² See my argument in Angela Schottenhammer, *Eine tangzeitliche Gesandtschaft des 8. Jahrhunderts an den Hof des Abbasidenkalifats (750–1258)* (Gossenberg, 2014).

⁴³ This is the argumentation of Dalby, "Court politics in late T'ang times", p. 609, who, however, most probably did not yet know about this stele.

⁴⁴ Fan Ch'eng-ta, *Kuei-hai yü-beng chih* (1175; Peking, 1999), Volume 8, 23, pp. 371–90; Chou, *Ling-wai tai-ta* 3, p. 5a–b. A German translation is provided by Almut Netolitzky, *Das Ling-wai tai-ta von Chou Ch'ü-fei: Eine Landeskunde Südkinas aus dem 12. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 1977). Chou Ch'ü-fei had served under Fan Ch'eng-ta as an official in Kuei-lin for some years, and he used and partly copied verbatim the works of Chia Tan and Fan Ch'eng-ta. In paragraph 3 of his *Kuei-hai yü-beng chih* he also talks about countries in the South Seas (Nan-hai) from which perfumes were exported to China. Unfortunately, both the *Huang-hua ssu-ta chi* by Chia Tan and the *Kuei-hai yü-beng chih* have been lost in their original form.

⁴⁵ Chao Ju-kua, *Chu-fan chih* (Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng ed.).

⁴⁶ See the information given in his epitaph. Angela Schottenhammer, *Grabinschriften in der Song-dynastie* (Heidelberg, 1995), pp. 172–4. The *Chu-fan chih* has been translated and annotated by Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua: His work on the Chinese and Arab trade in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries*, entitled *Chu-fan-chi*.

Among the collections of miscellaneous essays that also include information on trade goods and foreign customs, *Yu-huan chi-wen*, which recounts the personal experiences of Chang Shih-nan (d. after 1230) as a provincial official, deserves special mention.⁴⁷

All the Sung authors derived their information about foreign countries and products at second hand and, as a consequence, it is hardly surprising that their works contain various errors. Especially place names and detailed designations of medical plants, scented woods, and aromatics are generally very susceptible to confusion. Sometimes, authors also describe commodities as natural products of regions from which they in fact were only re-exported. Much valuable research was devoted to these sources in the course of the twentieth century, but by no means have all errors and ambiguities yet been solved.

NAUTICAL AND SHIPBUILDING TECHNOLOGY

Nautical and shipbuilding technology constituted a major *conditio sine qua non* of maritime commerce and naval undertakings. The greatest period of advancement in Chinese shipbuilding technology occurred during the Sung and Yüan dynasties.⁴⁸ In this context, the compass – the “south-pointing needle” (*chih-nan chen*) – may in fact be regarded as the great revolution in the sailor’s art, and its use is solidly attested for Chinese ships by 1090, just about a century before its initial appearance in the West.⁴⁹ New ports were opened, harbors were dredged, and the art of navigation experienced great advances. The magnetic mariner’s compass, the drawing of star and sea charts, and the publication of treatises on tides and currents as well as maps of foreign

⁴⁷ Chang Shih-nan, *Yu-huan chi-wen*, in *Chih-pu-tsu chai ts’ung-shu*, ed. Pao T’ing-po (Peking, 1999), Volume 3, 7, pp. 225–75.

⁴⁸ Jacques Dars, “Les jonques chinoises de haute mer sous les Song et les Yuan,” *Archipel* 18 (1979), pp. 41–56; Pierre-Yves Manguin, “Trading ships of the South China Sea: Shipbuilding techniques and their role in the history of the development of Asian trade networks,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 36 (1993), pp. 253–80.

⁴⁹ For a description of the compass, see Joseph Needham, *Physics*, Part 1 of *Physics and physical technology*, Volume 4 of *Science and civilisation in China*, ed. Joseph Needham (Cambridge, 1962), especially pp. 279 ff.; Joseph Needham, *Science and civilisation in China*, Volume 1 (Cambridge, 1965), p. 135; also Lo Jung-pang, “Chinese shipping and east–west trade from the tenth to the fourteenth century,” in *Sociétés et compagnies de commerce en Orient et dans l’océan Indien: Acte du huitième colloque internationale d’histoire maritime en Beyrouth*, 1966, ed. Michel Mollat (Paris, 1970), pp. 167–76; Furubayashi Morihiro, “Sōdai no zōsengyō ni tsuite,” in *Chūgoku kankei ronsetsu shiryō* 35 (1993), pp. 116–19; Sun Kuang-ch’i, “Sung-tai hang-hai chi-shu tsung-lun,” in *Hai-yang chiao-t’ung yü wen-ming* (Peking, 1993), pp. 181–202; Shiba Yoshinobu, “Sung Yüan shih-tai te ch’uan-po,” *Ch’uan-shih yen-chiu* 1 (1985), pp. 77–94; Ch’en Hsin-hsiung, “Sung Yüan te yüan-yang mao-i ch’uan,” in *Chung-kuo hai-yang fa-chan-shih lun-wen-chi (er)*, ed. Chung-kuo hai-yang fa-chan-shih lun-wen chi pien-chi wei-yüan-hui (Taipei, 1986), pp. 1–38.

countries, along with the new achievements in naval architecture, all contributed to this, and the Chinese were, eventually, even able to take over the shipping business of the Arabs, whose vessels were at that time still relatively simply built. Thus, by 1295, Marco Polo (c.1254–1324) could speak of China's "marvellous great shipping."⁵⁰ We have contemporary historical records relating to nautical questions and shipbuilding, but, unfortunately, no systematic nautical treatises. Recent archaeological finds, including those of underwater archaeology, have provided us with evidence that is lacking in the written accounts, throwing light upon these questions and supplementing the written tradition.

Already by the T'ang dynasty, more than twenty important shipyards were distributed along the Yangtze River, the coasts of Shantung, and southeast China; but during the Sung dynasty shipbuilding technology reached its peak. Lü I-hao (1071–1139) argued that southern timber was particularly well suited to withstand saltwater corrosion and most highly praised the ships of Fu-chien, followed by those from Kuang-tung and Kuang-hsi, and finally those from Wen-chou (Ju-an fu) and Ming-chou (Ch'ing-yüan fu). According to him, saltwater quickly damaged the wood of northern ships, making it hard for them to withstand stormy winds and so easily capsizing.⁵¹ More modern Chinese shipbuilding yards use mostly pine or camphor wood. As the quotation of Lü I-hao suggests, one of the reasons why the southeast of China was the center of shipbuilding lay in the availability of the necessary timber. Hardwood of a specific gravity of about 0.9 should be employed for frames, beams, and planking. Camphor wood is used for natural crooks and Oregon pine for large spars. Timbers identified from a shipwreck excavated at Ming-chou (modern Ning-po), located on the Hang-chou Bay in Liang-che, included a sternpost made of China fir (*shan*); planks made of China fir, camphor, and pine (*sung-shu*); frames of camphor; and bulkheads of pine and cypress. Samples from an excavation in the Ting-hai area, north Fu-chien, were, however, made from softwoods, such as pitch pine or yew.⁵²

⁵⁰ Arthur Christopher Moule and Paul Pelliot, trans. and annot., *Marco Polo* (± 1254 to ± 1325): *The description of the world* (London, 1938), pp. 354–5; see also Sir Henry Yule and Henri Cordier, *The book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian, concerning the kingdoms and marvels of the East, translated and edited, with extensive critical and explanatory notes, references, appendices and full indexes, preceded by an analytical and historical introduction*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (London, 1920; repr. New Delhi, 1993); also Paul Pelliot (posthumously published), *Notes on Marco Polo*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1959, 1963, 1973). Hans Ulrich Vogel reinvestigates the question whether Marco Polo actually went to China in *Marco Polo was in China: New evidence from currencies, salts, and revenues* (Leiden, 2012).

⁵¹ Lü I-hao, *Chung-mu chi* (*Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen ch'u-chi* ed.) 2, pp. 13b–14a.

⁵² Sarah Kenderdine, "Bai Jiao 1: The excavation of a Song dynasty shipwreck in the Dinghai area, Fujian province, China, 1995," *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* 24 No. 4 (1995), esp. p. 254.

Speaking of the so-called *shen-chou* or “sacred ships” of the ambassadors and *k'o-chou* or retainer ships, which carried the ambassador's staff but were still somewhat smaller than the *shen-chou*, Hsü Ching (1091–1153), the author of the *Hsüan-ho feng-shih Kao-li t'u-ching* (*Illustrated description of the Chinese embassy to Korea during the reign of Hsüan-ho*, 1119–25), describes the exterior and interior shape of these “sacred ships,” the anchors and sails used for particular purposes, as well as rudders and masts. He also explains that the knife-like shape of the keel enabled ships to “break through the waves” but also made them more prone to capsizing when sailing in shallow waters.⁵³ Such a hull and keel shape could still be seen in certain types of Chinese vessel in modern times. As a rule, all the oceangoing junks of the south had a similar hull and keel structure. An account written some time after 1673 provides us with an accurate description of a typical Sung/Yüan vessel. That the account is in fact accurate has been verified by an archaeological excavation of a late Sung ship found in 1974 in the Ch'üan-chou Bay in modern Fukien (see the description below). The 1673 account says,

The seagoing vessels of Chiang-nan are named “sand ships”, for, as their bottoms are flat and broad, they can sail over shoals and moor near sandbanks... without getting stuck... Chekiang ships... [are built in the same way] and can also sail among sandbanks, but they avoid shallow waters, as they are heavier than the sand ships. But the seagoing vessels of Fu-chien and Kuang-tung have round bottoms and high decks. At the base of their hulls there are large beams of wood in three sections called “dragon-spines” (*lung-ku*). If they enter shallow, sandy [water], the dragon-spine may get stuck in the sand, and if wind and tide are not favourable, there may be danger of pulling it off. But in sailing to the South Seas, where there are many islands and rocks in the water, ships with dragon-spines can turn more easily to avoid them.⁵⁴

In 1974, a late Sung oceangoing ship was found at Hou-chu, a former port of Ch'üan-chou, now about ten kilometers outside the city. The ship can

⁵³ Hsü Ching, *Hsüan-ho feng-shih Kao-li t'u-ching* (1124; *Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* ed.) 34, pp. 117 and 118. In 1124, two large ships were built for an embassy to Korea.

⁵⁴ Hsieh Chan-jen commenting on a passage of the *Jih-chih lu* by Ku Yen-wu (1613–82) was quoted by Joseph Needham, *Civil engineering and nautics*, Part 3 of *Physics and physical technology*, Volume 4 of *Science and civilisation in China*, ed. Joseph Needham (Cambridge, 1971), p. 429. Needham suggests that “the ‘lung-ku’ mentioned in this passage should not be considered as a keel in the European sense, for it is not the main longitudinal component of the vessel, this function devolving rather on three or more enormous hardwood wales which are built into the hull at or below the water line.” In fact, as Donald H. Keith and Christian J. Buys have emphasized, the true keel of the Ch'üan-chou ship is made in three sections: the stempost, the main keel, and a ‘tail keel’ scarfed to the after end of the main keel. Similarly, a re-examination of the Bayon relief from Angkor Thom reveals a deep-hulled vessel with a pointed bow, ransom stern, three masts, and a keel – all characteristics similar or identical to the Ch'üan-chou ship. Donald H. Keith and Christian J. Buys, “New light on medieval Chinese seagoing ship construction,” *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* 10 No. 2 (1981), pp. 119–32, esp. 126.

be dated precisely to 1277; that is to a date when the Mongols had already invaded and occupied most of China. It measured 24 meters in length and 9.15 meters in the beam (78 × 29.25 feet) and was clearly designed for sea voyages, with a deep draught and twelve bulkheads. The cargo consisted of commodities which were typical of Sung imports: more than 2,300 kilograms of fragrant woods from Southeast Asia, pepper, betel nut, cowries, cinnabar, tortoiseshells, and Somalian ambergris. The keel of the Ch'üan-chou shipwreck is constructed of three parts: the central and aft sections are made of pine and the forward section is of camphor wood.⁵⁵ The hull is double-planked, partly triple-planked. The planking is made of cedar wood. Everywhere at the joints of the planks, vestiges of tung putty were found. The main constituent of this putty is tung oil, which was extracted from the seeds of the tung oil tree (*Aleurites fordii*) – a famous tree also cultivated in Ch'üan-chou. Since the tenth century, Ch'üan-chou was also known as “*Tz'u-t'ung* city” due to the many tung oil trees in the region. Many putty compounds, which were obviously applied as caulking after the planks had been nailed up, were found in the compartments and the bottom part of the ship. Upon closer investigation, it became evident that these conglomerates were actually chunam, a mixture of putty and jute fibers (*Corchorus capsularis*). Tung-oil and rattan, which were used to make caulking for boats, are also referred to in contemporary historical records, such as the *Ling-wai tai-ta* and the *Collected works* (*Wen-chi*) of the high Sung official Chen Te-hsiu (1178–1235).⁵⁶

The navigation and shipbuilding of the circuit of Fu-chien and that of Ming-chou ranked among the first in the country, in terms of both tonnage and technology. The Sung shipyards on the southeast China coast (Liang-che and Fu-chien) probably even surpassed the shipbuilding technology of

⁵⁵ In the vertical upper face of the keel section, seven iron coins with traces of leaf decoration were found in holes; in the lower section, a copper alloy mirror came to light. The coins, symbols of good luck or longevity, were set in such a manner as to represent the star constellation of Ursa Major. The mirror is thought to represent the moon. The symbols should bring good luck and fair winds and represent the “Seven Star Ocean,” where there are many dangerous rocks. The mirror should reflect light and ensure a safe journey.

⁵⁶ Chou, *Ling-wai tai-ta* 6, p. 9b; Chen Te-hsiu, *Cheng-ching*, in *Hsi-shan hsien-sheng Chen Wen-chung-kung wen-chi* (c.1865, *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* ed.) 17, p. 48a; see also SS (1990) 449, p. 13229; 477, p. 13839; Tseng Kung-liang, ed., *Wu-ching tsung-yao* (*Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen ch'u-chi* ed.) 11, p. 13a. For excavation reports, see Fu-chien Ch'üan-chou hai-wai chiao-t'ung-shih po-wu-kuan, ed., *Ch'üan-chou-wan Sung-tai hai-ch'uan fa-chieh yü yen-chiu* (Peking, 1987); also Jeremy Green, “The Song dynasty shipwreck at Quanzhou, Fujian province, People's Republic of China,” *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* 12 No. 3 (1983), pp. 253–61; Jeremy Green, Nick Burningham, and the Museum of Overseas Communication, “The ship from Quanzhou, Fujian province, People's Republic of China,” *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* 27 No. 4 (1998), pp. 277–301. Details on *chu-nam* and tung oil are, for example, provided by Li Guo-Qing, “Archaeological evidence for the use of ‘chu-nam’ on the 13th century Quanzhou ship, Fujian province, China,” *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* 18 No. 4 (1989), pp. 277–83.

Kuang-chou and Kuang-tung circuit. In August 1978 and April 1979, three shipbuilding yards, a seagoing vessel, and a large quantity of ceramics made in the Sung and Yüan Lung-ch'üan kilns were found at Tung-men-k'ou in Ning-po. In addition, celadons from the Yüeh kilns of the T'ang dynasty have been excavated. The site was located outside the T'ang dynasty gate of Ming-chou and during the T'ang, Sung, and early Yüan dynasties functioned as a wharf for sea transport. Not far away, to the southwest, is the site of the Sung and Yüan dynasties market that was used by ships trading with Ming-chou. In the year 1090, Emperor Che-tsung (r. 1085–1100) gave the order to have 600 ships built annually by Wen-chou and Ming-chou. When Hsü Ching was sent as an envoy to Korea during the reign of Emperor Hui-tsung (r. 1100–1126), two more large “sacred ships” were built at Ming-chou. They probably had a displacement of over 1,100 tons. The seagoing vessel discovered in Ming-chou had a sharp bottom, a waterline length of more than 13 meters, a beam of 4.5 meters, a height of hull of about 2.4 meters, and a displacement of 40 tons.⁵⁷

As for anchors, the earliest known anchors of China were made of stone. But as a single stone was insufficient to secure larger ships, stone anchors were gradually modified, secured by ropes between two forked pieces of timber with a wooden stock placed above the stone. Sung dynasty ships were usually provided with one principal anchor and two or three subordinate ones, the latter being about two-thirds the size of the principal one. In 1982, the remains of a Sung dynasty stone (granite) anchor with wooden arms were found in the Ch'üan-chou Bay near Fa-shih. Wooden anchors were made of extremely dense, hard, and heavy woods, such as ironwood (*Mesur ferrea*) or lignum vitae (*Cyclobulnopsis glauca*). An ironwood anchor of this type, dated to the late Sung or early Yüan dynasty, was excavated in Ch'üan-chou Bay in 1975.⁵⁸

THE SUNG NAVY

China's position as a maritime power during the Sung was primarily of an economic nature. Compared to its successors, the Mongol Yüan rulers of China, or, for example, the Yung-lo Emperor (r. 1402–24) of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), the Sung court's foreign political naval ambitions were modest. With

⁵⁷ It was a three-masted ship with a sharp stem, sharp bottom, and square stern, and had the advantage of a deeper draught and a better seagoing capability. Lin Shi-min, Tu Keng-ch'i, and Jeremy Green, “Waterfront excavations at Dongmenkou, Ningbo, Zhejiang province, PRC,” *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* 20 No. 4 (1991), pp. 299–311.

⁵⁸ For further information on anchors, see e.g. Li Guo-Qing, “Ancient Chinese anchors: Their rigging and conservation,” *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* 27 No. 4 (1998), pp. 307–12.

the exception of an unsuccessful military expedition to Annam from 1075 to 1077,⁵⁹ there is not much to be reported about greater naval aggression. When we speak of China as an overseas naval power, this has to refer to the late Sung, the Yüan, and the early Ming periods.⁶⁰

Nevertheless, the Sung rulers possessed a deep-water navy, which probably reached the zenith of its power during the decades from 1164 to 1204. One driving factor behind the establishment of the navy was the wish to protect merchants' vessels, and thus the conditions of maritime commerce in general. Early in the tenth century, Wang Shen-chih (862–925), the ruler of the Min kingdom in Fu-chien, invited foreign merchants to come to trade, but because of the rough sea off the coast of Fu-chien apparently only a few responded. Wang therefore cleared away rocks and built a harbour near Fu-chou. According to the biography of Wang Shen-chih in the *New history of the Five Dynasties* (*Hsin Wu-tai shih*), there was a big thunderstorm one night which opened the passage for a new harbour, as a consequence of which foreign ships could easily reach Fu-chou. The people of Min thought this had happened because of Wang Shen-chih's good government and called the new harbor Kan-t'ang Harbor (Sweet Pears Harbor).⁶¹ In Fu-chien, three harbours were opened either by dredging or by widening rivers. Later, in Northern Sung times, one of the units of the provincial navy of Kuang-nan, the "Convoy Escort Squadron" (*Chia-kang shui-chün*), accompanied and provided protection to incoming and outgoing merchant ships, a practice that was continued in the Southern Sung dynasty.

In 957, Emperor Shih-tsung (r. 954–9) of the Later Chou Dynasty (951–60) had more than 100 warships built and he employed instructors to train his men as mariners for naval warfare against the Southern T'ang dynasty (937–75). The first Sung emperor, T'ai-tsu (r. 960–76), who had served as an army officer under Shih-tsung, continued to attach great importance to shipbuilding and is said to have often visited the shipyards.⁶² The navy played a major

⁵⁹ SS (1990) 290, p. 9725; see also Lo Jung-pang, "Maritime commerce and its relation to the Sung navy," *Journal of the economic and social history of the Orient* 12 No. 1 (1969), p. 78; for more information on Annam (Chiao-chih) during the Sung, see also SS (1990) 198, p. 4953; 332, p. 10685; 333, p. 10713; 488, pp. 14057–72 *passim*.

⁶⁰ The history of the Sung navy is excellently described by Lo Jung-pang, "The emergence of China as a sea power during the late Sung and early Yüan periods," *Far Eastern quarterly* 14 No. 4 (1955), pp. 489–503; Lo Jung-pang, "Maritime commerce and its relation to the Sung navy," pp. 63, 70; Sogabe Shizuo, "Nan Sō no kaigun," in *Haneda hakushi shōju kinen Tōyōshi ronsō*, ed. Haneda Hakushi kanreki kinenkai (Kyōto, 1950), pp. 580–601; Lo Jung-pang, *China as a sea power*.

⁶¹ Ou-yang Hsiu et al., eds., *Hsin Wu-tai shih* (1073; Peking, 1974, repr. 1997) 68, p. 846.

⁶² Apparently the oldest existing detailed description of warships dates to 759 and was compiled by Li Ch'üan. Towards the end of the eighth century, great activity in shipbuilding emerged, especially in the field of canal and riverboat construction. The initiatives also brought about positive effects for the construction of seagoing vessels and are closely associated with the name of Liu Yen, who established ten

role in winning the war against the kingdom of Later Shu (934–65) and the Southern T'ang. T'ai-tsu's successor, T'ai-tsung (r. 977–97), at first carried on China's naval program. But after a campaign against the kingdom of Wu-yüeh (902–78) and an unsuccessful expedition against Annam, he gradually lost interest in the navy. After 987, the navy became, as Lo Jung-pang put it, "only an ornamental arm of the government and naval exercises degenerated into water sports for the entertainment of the court."⁶³ Consequently, the authorities during the eleventh century basically relied on navies composed of river units under provincial command. In 1068, the navy was reorganized and many former provincial units were elevated into imperial service. But only shortly later, in 1077, China launched an unsuccessful war against Annam. One of the reasons for its defeat was apparently the insufficiency of seagoing vessels. Therefore the central government not only initiated a large-scale shipbuilding program, but also mobilized merchants to contribute ships. As merchants profited from safe coastal waters, they also had an interest in a strong navy and, consequently, often voluntarily supported the government in its naval policy.

Until the Hsi-ning reign era (1068–77), there were two central shipyards on the coast of China (in Hang-chou and Kuang-chou), and provincial yards located inland. After the Hsi-ning era, shipyards also were established in Ming-chou and Wen-chou. In 1090, these two shipyards were ordered to construct 600 ships annually. Furthermore, yards in Liang-che and the circuit of Huai-nan received orders to build 300 ships. Many naval authorities, however, complained that these ships were not seaworthy and, consequently, continued to hire and borrow vessels from private owners. It was, of course, not in the interest of the merchants to have a large proportion of their ships regularly hired out to official authorities, and in 1112, this practice was eventually prohibited. If the government really intended to build up a strong and permanent navy, it had to launch another initiative to construct more and better vessels. It was, however, not until after the fall of the Northern Sung dynasty in 1126 that greater efforts were made, and that China finally possessed a permanent, seagoing imperial navy.⁶⁴

Many government officials advocated the adoption of a strong naval policy, transforming the navy from more or less a mere defensive instrument into a weapon of offense. Li Kang (1083–1140), a chief councilor under Emperor Kao-tsung (r. 1127–1162) and one of the leaders of the so-called "war party,"

shipyards and offered competitive rewards. Many naval vessels were used in the wars of the Five Dynasties period. For further information, see Joseph Needham, *Civil engineering and nautics*, esp. pp. 439–77.

⁶³ Lo, "Maritime commerce and its relation to the Sung navy," pp. 77–8.

⁶⁴ These developments are described in Lo, "Maritime commerce and its relation to the Sung navy."

played a major role in building up a strong imperial navy and mobilizing provincial naval units. Li Kang's injunctions that "China must be strong enough to defend herself, before she can strike back at her enemies," and that "China must dispose of the power to strike back, before there can be any peace negotiations," are well known.⁶⁵ But it is perhaps less known that they referred not only to the land army, but also to the navy. After the move of the Sung court and capital to Hang-chou in 1127, Hang-chou was particularly exposed to attacks by sea, while the network of canals and ditches dug for the water transportation of grain served at the same time as a means of defense. To patrol the waterways of the region between the Huai river and the Yangtze and to guard the entire region, the government also needed a permanent navy. Officially, the navy was administered by a central government office, the Office of the Imperial Commissioner for the Control and Organization of the Coastal Areas (*Yen-hai chih-chih shih-ssu*), which in 1132 was established at Ting-hai county, Ming-chou. Whereas, in 1130, the navy still consisted of not more than eleven squadrons with 3,000 men, in 1174 its capacity had already increased to fifteen squadrons with 21,000 men, and by 1237 it had grown to twenty squadrons with almost 52,000 men. The largest base was established in 1167 at Hsü-p'u, guarding the entrance to the Yangtze river and protecting a flourishing local port, which came to be known as Shanghai. Ting-hai, the second-largest base, defended the capital, Hang-chou. The establishment of a strong and mobile navy enabled China at least partly to counterbalance the land superiority of her enemies' cavalry. In 1161, when the Jurchen tried to conquer Southeast China by sea, their fleet was destroyed by the Chinese off the coast of Shantung – a victory which was made possible especially by the effective use of firearms. In strengthening the navy, the government drew heavily upon Fu-chien and Kuang-tung for men and ships. In 1166, for example, 2,000 men with arms and equipment from the Tso-i Squadron at Ch'üan-chou were sent to Hsü-p'u, in preparation for its establishment as a naval base the next year.⁶⁶

The experience acquired in the construction of commercial vessels was utilized in the building of warships, and soon the navy deployed various types of warship. Firearms played an important role in naval activities. Firebombs, so-called *huo-p'ao*, cast by catapults, first appeared in the tenth century and were later adopted in naval warfare. In 1129, the government decreed that these firebombs should be made standard equipment on all warships. The next development was explosive weapons, such as the *p'i-li-p'ao*, rudimentary

⁶⁵ Li Kang, *Sung Li Chung-ting-kung tson-i shih-wu chüan, wen-chi-hsüan er-shih-chiu chuan, shou ssu chüan* (1639, *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* ed.) 26, p. 7a.

⁶⁶ *SS* (1990) 33, p. 635.

fragmentation bombs. By the middle of the thirteenth century, the navy was employing prototypes of a gun, so-called *t'u-buo-ch'iang*, from the tubes of which missiles could be discharged. By the middle of the fourteenth century (during the Yüan), iron bombs were in general use. The firepower of the Sung navy is also indicated by the fact that about half of the fighting men on the warships were archers, crossbowmen, and operators of firearms. As a reaction to the Chin invasion the Sung navy was greatly expanded.⁶⁷ By the first half of the thirteenth century, the Sung navy ranged unchallenged over the East China Sea. But it was not until after the Mongol conquest that the Chinese navy was really used as an instrument of aggression.⁶⁸

The cost of maintaining the military far outweighed what the government could afford. In the first years of the Southern Sung, for example, the expenditure on the army reached c.9.6 million strings of cash per year, a figure which climbed further when the Sung intensified their armament.⁶⁹ In 1136, the expenses of the Office for the Control and Organization of the Coastal Areas, which had the control over the naval bases and fleets in the circuits of Huai-tung, Liang-che, and sometimes Fu-chien, came up to 2,000 ounces (*liang*) of silver, 2,000 strings of cash, 100 bales of silk, and regular allotments of rice, plus the status, grade, and salary of the staff members, which were equivalent to those of fiscal commissioners (*chuan-yün shih*).

Faced with these expenditures, the government sought ways to increase its revenues or creatively pay its expenses. One such measure was the sale of so-called "monk certificates" (*tu-tieh*), which then circulated as a particular form of paper money with an official face value. Originally, these certificates were issued to Buddhist monks to exempt them from corvée labour. But the Sung government soon recognized these certificates as a welcome financial means to pay for all kinds of economic activity, including the construction of ships, without paying with cash (i.e. real value). For example, when the government intended to purchase ships or have them constructed, it paid the merchants or the constructors with monk certificates.⁷⁰ Chen Te-hsiu, for example, informs us that monk certificates were used to pay for the construction of warships and the repairing of military outposts,⁷¹ or to procure, for example, tung

⁶⁷ See Lo Jung-pang, *China as a sea power*, pp. 129–85, for details.

⁶⁸ For details, see Lo, "Maritime commerce and its relation to the Sung navy," pp. 91 ff. This, however, does not mean that the Sung navy existed only on paper. In 1170, a traveler on the Yangtze, for example, watched naval maneuvers carried out by 700 ships, each said to be about 100 feet long, with "castles," "towers," flags flying, and drums beating.

⁶⁹ Lo, "Maritime commerce and its relation to the Sung navy," pp. 62–3.

⁷⁰ For further details, see also the section "The Government's fiscal budget and its relation to maritime trade" in this chapter.

⁷¹ Chen Te-hsiu, *Hsi-shan hsien-sheng Chen Wen-chung-kung wen-chi* (c. 1865 ed.) 15, p. 4a.

oil.⁷² Later, in 1245, *hui-tzu* valued at 1 million strings of cash were used to reward the naval and land forces.

Besides this financial-political aspect, the Sung government's specific treatment of the merchants' ships and wealth in general, in the long run, had quite negative consequences for the navy. As mentioned above, merchants did in fact profit from safe waters and, consequently, were generally willing to make their contribution to the navy's guaranteeing safe waters. In this context, 388 wealthy merchants took part in the war of 1161 against the Jurchen, notably in the battles on the Yangtze. They provided the navy with ships, sailors, and financial resources. In 1166, a kind of rotation system was worked out according to which merchant ships had to be registered at official authorities and were then divided into three groups: *chia*, *i*, and *ping*. These groups rotated in such a way that, while the government used one group, the merchants had the other two groups of ships at their disposal. The government also demanded ships and funds, offering honorary ranks and titles in return. Already at this point, however, many merchants complained that the state demands would bankrupt them. As the need for ships increased with an imminent invasion by the Mongols in the thirteenth century, the government's demands on shipowners intensified as well. Suffering from a shortage of ships, merchants were simply forced to hand over their vessels, and even those traders whose ships had been damaged, lost in storms or captured by pirates were obliged to provide some.⁷³ Towards the end of the dynasty, the former relationship of reciprocal benefit turned into one-sided exploitation by the state of the merchants and their material and financial resources. While the Sung government was alienating the merchants with its compulsory measures and inaction, the Mongols tried to gain the support of both the merchants and Sung naval officials. This policy was a part of their strategy and their military expansion and, eventually, was quite successful. In 1277, the fugitive imperial family arrived at Ch'üan-chou having taken the sea route from Hang-chou. The city was governed by the prefect P'u Shou-keng (d. 1296), a man of Persian or Arab origin, who was simultaneously employed as Superintendent of Maritime Trade (*T'i-chü shih-po shih*), Pacification Commissioner of Fu-chien, Military Commissioner, and General of Coastal Defense (*Yen-hai tu chih-chih shih*), thus supervising maritime trade, controlling the civil administration, and commanding the local naval forces.⁷⁴ When Sung officers seized some of

⁷² Chen, *Cheng-ching*, p. 48a. Accordingly the people were not paid in cash but with kinds of paper money (see also pp. 45a-48b in general).

⁷³ The situation at that time is perhaps best described in the works of Wu Ch'ien (d. 1262), Duke of Hsü. Wu Ch'ien, *Hsü-kuo-kung tsou-i* (1231-60, *T'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* ed.).

⁷⁴ Kuwabara Jitzuō, "On P'u-shou Keng: A man of the western regions, who was the superintendent of the trading ships' office in Ch'üan-chou towards the end of the Sung dynasty, together with a general sketch

his ships, he openly declared his submission to the Mongol khan and delivered the city and his ships to the Yüan forces. Not much later, the city of Kuang-chou suffered a similar fate. The eventual collapse of Sung resistance in the historic battle at Yai-shan on March 19, 1279, made the Mongols the undisputed rulers of China.

OFFICIAL ADMINISTRATION OF MARITIME TRADE

The great profits and exotic goods that could be gained from maritime trade not only encouraged more and more merchants to engage in it, but also elicited the involvement of the Chinese government and government officials. Through official purchases of smaller or larger portions of the commodities brought to China or, later, by imposing taxes on imported goods and those to be exported, the official administrators of this foreign trade provided the government with great quantities of foreign commodities and money. The great profits to be made in seaborne trade also resulted in corruption among many of the responsible officials.

During the T'ang dynasty, maritime trade had already undergone rapid development. Persian and Arab ships (*Hsi-yü bo*) came regularly to Kuang-chou⁷⁵ and probably also some other ports along the Chinese southeast coast, as well as to Yang-chou. We know that some foreigners even settled in Kuang-chou. These foreign merchants brought to China especially incense, spices, perfumes, and rare stones, among other goods, and exchanged these for fine Chinese manufactured commodities, such as silks, porcelain, copper utensils, and iron tools. T'ang rulers made great efforts to facilitate trade and even to protect the interests of merchants.⁷⁶ Any surcharges on foreign merchants

of the trade of the Arabs in China during the T'ang and Sung eras," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tōyō Bunko* 2 No. 1 (1928), pp. 1-79; 7 No. 1 (1935), pp. 1-104 (revised by Paul Pelliot, "Les publications du Tōyō Bunkō," *T'oung-pao* 26 (1929), pp. 364-5); Serge Elisséev, "Bibliography: *Memoirs of the research department of the Tōyō Bunkō (The oriental library)* No. 7 Tōkyō, 1935. 1-104," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 1 No. 2 (July 1936), pp. 265-7. Both Pelliot's (in French) and Elisséev's (in English) reviews are positive. Only Pelliot had some minor items of critique, for example that Kuwabara still used the old transcription form "Śrīboja" or "Śrībhoja" which should be abandoned in favour of "Śrīvijaya," as suggested by M. Coedès. Kuwabara Jitzuō, *Ho Jukō no jiseki: Tō Sō jidai ni okeru Arabujin no Shina tsūshō no gaikyō, tokuni Sōmatsu no Teikyō Shihaku Seikijin* (Tōkyō, 1935); see also Chuang Wei-chi, *Hai-shang chi* (Hsia-men, 1996), pp. 247-58, 270-84; So Kee-Long (Su Chi-lang or Billy K. L. So), "P'u Shou-keng: A reassessment," in So Kee-Long, *Prosperity, region, and institutions in maritime China: The South Fukien pattern, 946-1368* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), pp. 301-5.

⁷⁵ Liu Hsiü et al., eds., *Chiu T'ang shu* (Peking, 1997) 131, p. 3635.

⁷⁶ For a brief survey of the early administration of maritime trade and a thorough study of the administration of T'ang maritime trade, see the excellent article by Wang Chen-p'ing, "T'ang maritime trade administration," *Asia Major*, 3rd series 4 No. 1 (1991), pp. 7-38; also Wang Hsia, "T'ang-tai Po-hai-ien ch'u-fang Jih-pen te kang-k'ou ho hang-hsien," *Hai-chiao-shih yen-chiu* 3 (1981), pp. 5-11; Wu T'ai, "Shih-lun Han-T'ang shih-ch'i hai-wai mao-i te chi-ko wen-t'i," *Hai-chiao-shih yen-chiu* 3 (1981), pp. 52-62; Wu T'ing-yü, "Sui-T'ang shih-ch'i te kuo-chi mao-i," *Li-shih chiao-hsieh* 2 (1957), pp. 5-8; Tansen Sen, "Administration of maritime trade during the Tang and Song dynasties," *China report* 32

were prohibited,⁷⁷ and foreign merchants were permitted to buy and own property as long as it was purchased with their income from trade in China.⁷⁸ Already in the year 834, the T'ang emperor Wen-tsung (r. 826–40) decreed that “foreign goods in whatever quantity are free for sale anywhere in the territory as long as merchants have paid their 10 percent duty and completed the official government purchase (*kuan-mai*) first.”⁷⁹ Yet it is important to note that during the T'ang dynasty, the principal interest of rulers was not to earn money through overseas trade but to foster foreign relations and to secure supplies of foreign luxury and exotic goods. The T'ang government did not directly control or monopolize these trade relations, nor was it directly involved. The desired foreign commodities were acquired through three indirect channels: as “seasonal offerings” (*shih-chin*) of local products (*fang-wu*) made by local officials, through “official purchasing” (*kung-shih* or *shou-shih*), or as “annual tribute” (*ch'ao-kung*). The “seasonal offerings” were personal gifts to the emperor aimed at gaining the favour of the central government. Local authorities were granted the privilege of “official purchasing,” which in practice meant that they had the first option in the trade with foreign merchants and the acquisition of foreign products, before the latter entered the regular Chinese market.

The reasons for this more “passive” attitude of the T'ang rulers towards maritime trade have to be sought, above all, in the fact that they were largely satisfied with being provided with a wide range of foreign specialties and luxury items. The T'ang court treated maritime trade primarily from the standpoint of a consumer and it was consequently interested in the use value of the imported goods. In addition, the rulers were largely occupied with the consolidation of power on the mainland, which was apparently much more important than any “control” of seaborne trade. The government also seems to have been concerned about its moral image and did not want to “compete for profits against its own people” (*yü min cheng li*) by filling its coffers through the taxation of maritime trade.⁸⁰

This attitude gradually changed over the course of the tenth century, although tribute trade was carried on throughout the Sung dynasty.⁸¹ Seaborne

No. 2 (1996), pp. 251–67; Liao Ta-k'o, “Lun T'ang-tai Fu-chien te tui-wai mao-i-kang,” *Chuan-i'i yen-chiu* 3 (1996), pp. 44–7; Wada Hisanori, “Tōdai ni okeru shihakushi no sōchi,” in *Wada hakushi koki kinen Tōyōshi ronsō*, ed. Wada hakushi koki kinen Tōyōshi ronsō henshū iinkai (Tōkyō, 1960), pp. 1051–62.

⁷⁷ Tung Kao et al., eds., *Ch'üan T'ang-wen* (1814; Shanghai, 1990) 75, p. 342.

⁷⁸ Ssu-ma Kuang, *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* (1067–84; Shanghai, 1986), p. 1547.

⁷⁹ Ku Yen-wu, *T'ien-hsia chün-kuo li-ping shu* (*Erb-lin-chai* 1901 ed.) 120, p. 3b.

⁸⁰ For details cf. Wang, “T'ang maritime trade administration,” pp. 7–38.

⁸¹ Concerning the Sung tribute trade as well as tribute missions, see, above all, Robert M. Hartwell, *Tribute missions to China, 960–1126* (Philadelphia, 1983); Werner Eichhorn, “Bestimmungen für Tributgesandtschaften zur Song-Zeit,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 114 No. 1 (1964), pp. 282–390; Herbert Franke, “Einige Bemerkungen zu Gesandtschaftsreisen in der Sung-Zeit,”

trade increasingly came to be regarded as a financial source that could serve the political purposes of the state.⁸² In order to turn it into a source to be tapped, local rulers and, subsequently, the Sung government made many efforts to expand and promote maritime trade. Merchants were encouraged to attract foreign traders. They were provided with facilities for their shipping, and those who returned with commodities which paid over a certain amount of money in import duty were rewarded, new harbours were built, and special festivities were organized for foreign traders. The government also built warehouses in which the merchants could store their goods. The construction of twelve huge buildings (*chü lou shi-er chien*) near the capital, K'ai-feng, during the reign of Emperor Shih-tsung of the Later Chou dynasty may serve as an example.⁸³ Beacons set up every thirty *li* along the coast also served as lighthouses for merchant vessels.⁸⁴ Particular attention was furthermore paid to the defense of coastal cities and the protection of merchants' ships from pirate attacks. As Lo Jung-pang has shown, during the Northern Sung dynasty, when Kuang-chou was still the principal port of China, bringing in about 80–90 percent of the total volume of maritime commerce, numerous naval stations (*chai*) and observation posts were established along the coast from Kuang-chou to Ju-chou (either Tan-kan Island, located southeast of modern Hong Kong, or Hai-ling Island, located southeast of Yang-chiang, Kuang-tung); over a distance, that is, of 700 *li* (roughly 200 miles). In other words, the Sung government encouraged merchants to conduct maritime trade and facilitated their doing so.⁸⁵

As the Chinese court was originally interested mainly in foreign commodities, exotic specialties, and luxury goods, one may regard this early maritime trade as one that primarily satisfied the private interests of the Chinese ruling and social elite. Starting in the tenth century, rulers and emperors began to treat maritime trade as a way to underpin the economic foundation of their regimes. They sought to use the profits derived from this trade not only for their own private consumption needs, but to pay for the political and

Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens 125 (1979), pp. 20–6; Herbert Franke, "Sung embassies: Some general observations," in *China among equals: The Middle Kingdom and its neighbors, 10th–14th centuries*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 116–48; James A. Anderson, "Frontier management and tribute relations along the empire's southern border: China and Vietnam in the 10th and 11th centuries" (diss., University of Washington, 1999); for the Mongol period cf. H. F. Schurmann, "Mongolian tributary practices of the thirteenth century," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic studies* 19 Nos. 3–4 (December 1956), pp. 304–89.

⁸² This development has also been described by Lo Jung-pang, "Maritime commerce and its relation to the Sung navy," pp. 57–101.

⁸³ Wen Ying, *Yü-bu ch'ing-hua*, in *Chih-pu-tsu chai ts'ung-shu* (Peking, 1999), Volume 2, 6, pp. 580–1.

⁸⁴ Tseng Kung-liang, ed., *Wu-ching tsung-yao* 5, p. 21a.

⁸⁵ Lo, "Maritime commerce and its relation to the Sung navy," pp. 72–3.

economic maintenance of the state. Thus maritime trade came to be used primarily for political and economic purposes rather than private interests. This was a decisive and far-reaching change in the attitude of Chinese rulers towards maritime trade. The reasons why this took place in the tenth century have to be sought in the political and economic conditions of contemporary China. Being split up into several, often competing, kingdoms, many of these smaller regimes suddenly had to seek new economic resources or simply rebuild their economies, either because former ties and commercial contacts had been cut off or because their former economic basis was insufficient for their needs. For the coastal kingdoms, maritime trade offered a promising means to consolidate and develop their domestic economy. The dynasty of the Southern Han in Kuang-tung; the Min kingdom (910–46) in Fu-chien and later the kingdom of the independent Ch'üan-chou rulers in Min-nan, Fu-chien; and the kingdom of Wu-yüeh (902–78) in Chekiang may serve as examples.⁸⁶

The necessary precondition for taking maritime trade as a positive starting point for the promotion of a state's economy lay in the disposal of wealth – be it in the form of manufactured goods or natural resources – which could be exchanged for foreign commodities. Unlike the claim still made repeatedly by modern, particularly Chinese, authors, a flourishing trade could not be born out of complete poverty.⁸⁷ Whoever intends to profit from trade needs commodities to trade. In the case of the Min kingdom, ceramics and metals

⁸⁶ For more information on these kingdoms, see Edward H. Schafer, "The history of the empire of Southern Han: According to chapter 65 of the *Wu Tai Shih* of Ou-yang Hsiu," in *Silver Jubilee Volume of the Zinbun-kagaku-kenkyüsho, Kyoto University*, trans. and annot. Edward H. Schafer et al. (Kyōto, 1954), pp. 339–69; Edward H. Schafer, "The reign of Liu Ch'ang, last emperor of Southern Han" (diss., University of California, 1947); Edmund Henry Worthy Jr., "Diplomacy for survival: Domestic and foreign relations of Wu Yüeh, 907–978," in *China among equals: The Middle Kingdom and its neighbors*, ed. Morris Rossabi (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 17–44; Wang Gungwu, "Merchants without empire: The Hokkien sojourning community," in *The rise of merchant empires: Long distance trade in the early modern world 1350–1750*, ed. James D. Tracy (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 400–21; Hugh R. Clark, "Consolidation of the South China frontier: The development of Ch'üan-chou, 699–1126" (diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1981); Hugh R. Clark, "Quanzhou (Fujian) during the Tang–Song interregnum," *T'oung-pao* 68 (1982), pp. 132–49; So Kee-Long (Su Chi-lang or Billy K. L. So), "Developments in southern Fukien under the T'ang and the Ming," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115 No. 3 (July–September 1995), pp. 443–51; Angela Schottenhammer, "Local politico-economic particulars of Quanzhou during the tenth century," *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies* 29 (1999), pp. 1–41; and the chapter on the Southern Kingdoms in Hugh R. Clark, "The southern kingdoms between the T'ang and the Sung, 909–979," in *The Cambridge history of China*, Volume 5, Part 1: *The Sung dynasty and its precursors, 907–1279*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge and New York, 2009), pp. 133–205.

⁸⁷ Such an argument can be found in local sources from the late Southern Sung, Yüan, and Ming periods. See, for example, Ch'üan-chou-chih pien-tsuai wei-yüan-hui pan-kung-shih, ed., *Wan-li Ch'üan-chou fu-chih* (Ch'üan-chou, 1985); Yang Ssu-ch'ien et al., *Ch'üan-chou fu-chih* (Ming Wan-li ed.) 19, p. 1a; 20, p. 4a–b; Ch'en Mao-jen, *Ch'üan-nan tsa-chih* (Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng chen-pen ed.) shang, p. 9; Chen, *Hsi-shan hsien-sheng Chen Wen-chung-kung wen-chi* 15, pp. 253, 260–1; Wang Hsiang-chih, *Yü-ti chi-sheng* (c. 1221; Taipei, 1971) 130, p. 11a–b. See also Li, *Ch'üan-chou yü wo-kuo*, p. 96.

were important export commodities. The situation was similar with the kingdoms of Wu-yüeh and Southern T'ang, in whose territories some of the finest kaolin clays (*Kao-ling-t'u*) for the production of ceramics were located. Their major kilns, such as those of Lung-ch'üan and Ching-te-chen, later became well known. In addition, this region was famous for its high-quality silk fabrics. The Southern Han, with Kuang-chou as its capital, also disposed of precious metals and kaolin resources. Furthermore, its rulers profited from the role of Kuang-chou as the major Chinese entrepôt for foreign trade, a function they had "inherited" from the T'ang dynasty. To sustain a flourishing foreign trade, the rulers of these states could not simply impose high taxes on transactions, because such a measure would have immediately discouraged foreign traders. They first had to attract merchants and offer them inducements to trade, and they had to be very cautious not to take too great a profit therefrom. They did not siphon off all the profit, and increasing numbers of foreign merchants followed their invitations. The Wu-yüeh kingdom mainly traded with Japan and Korea, whereas the Min and Nan Han kingdoms traded primarily with countries in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean.

The turnover of domestic and foreign commodities also required specific markets or places for exchange. In this context, Wu Jen-ch'en (1628?–1689?) in the *Shih-kuo ch'un-ch'iu* (Spring and autumn of the Ten Kingdoms) mentions a Monopoly Exchange Office (*Chüeh-i-wu*) in the Min Kingdom:

Emperor T'ai-tsu of Min (909–25) appointed Chang Mu as the director of the Monopoly Exchange Office (*chüeh-i-wu*)... He attracted southern barbarian merchants (*chao-lai Man-shang*) to trade [with the Min Kingdom] and amassed a great fortune without ruining [the merchants]. The wealth of the country became greater day by day.⁸⁸

Although this is a seventeenth-century source, scholars nowadays generally agree that the existence of this Monopoly Exchange Office in Min is a historical fact. The quotation indirectly also suggests that taxing maritime trade highly was obviously not the aim of the Min ruler – and it is plausible that such a policy would have not only ruined merchants but also put an end to any flourishing maritime trade. The Chang Mu mentioned had apparently found the happy medium, while still guaranteeing great profits for the state.

After their reunification of China, the Sung rulers, to a greater extent than had been the case before in Chinese society, intended to profit from a commercialization of their economy and promoted both domestic and foreign trade. Although, at the beginning of the dynasty, they strictly surveyed trading activities, and prohibited merchants from crossing the Yangtze for the

⁸⁸ Wu Jen-ch'en, *Shih-kuo ch'un-ch'iu* (seventeenth century, 1886 ed.) 95, p. 6b.

purpose of overseas trade⁸⁹ or more generally from engaging in overseas trade,⁹⁰ towards the end of the tenth century the government gradually loosened these restrictions.⁹¹ The consequent reformation of the economy brought about the birth of China's extensive maritime commercial network. Yet the early Sung rulers, like their T'ang predecessors, were still apparently primarily interested in the use value of the imported products. This attitude becomes obvious from their early organization and administration of maritime trade. To oversee maritime trade, Emperor T'ai-tsu in 971 (*k'ai-pao* 4) appointed the Kuang-chou officials P'an Mei (921–987) and Yin Ch'ung-k'o as Maritime Trade Commissioners (*shih-po shih*). This date is generally regarded as the date of the Sung re-establishment of the Maritime Trade Office in Kuang-chou.⁹² Subsequently, the early Sung rulers gradually began to reorganize its administrative structure. Already in 977, a certain Chang Sun, the director of the Warehouse for Aromatics (*hsiang-yao-k'u*), proposed the establishment of a Monopoly Exchange Bureau (*ch'ieh-i-shu*) in the capital, K'ai-feng, in order to resell foreign imports through a government monopoly system.⁹³ His proposal was approved by Emperor T'ai-tsung. Within one year the income of the office reached 300,000 strings of cash (*min*).⁹⁴ It is not absolutely clear if this *ch'ieh-i-shu* was the same office as the *ch'ieh-i-yüan* (also translated as Monopoly Exchange Bureau), which was a subsection of the Ministry of Revenue (*hu-fu*) but whose concrete functions and personnel are still unclear. It seems to have been responsible only for aromatics, spices, and medicinal plants (*hsiang-yao*) in order to impose a monopoly over these highly valued commodities. Possibly, the office was the predecessor of the Monopoly Exchange Section (*ch'ieh-i-an*) founded in 1080.⁹⁵ The *Sung-shih* at least states that the latter was

⁸⁹ SS (1990) 186, p. 4558.

⁹⁰ See, for example, Hsü Sung et al., eds. *Sung hui-yao chi-kao* (Ch'ing; Taipei, 1976) (hereafter SHY (1976)) *Chih-kuan* 44, pp. 1b–2a. Accordingly, in 976 (first year of T'ai-p'ing hsing-kuo era) it was ordered that anybody who dared to offer foreign merchants commodities and made a profit exceeding 100 *wen* would be punished; if the amount exceeded 15,000 *wen* his face would be tattooed and he would be banished to an island. In 994 (fifth year of Ch'un-hua era), the regulations were extended: whoever traded with an amount exceeding four strings of cash would be punished to labour service; if the amount exceeded twenty strings of cash, his face would be tattooed and he would have to serve in the army.

⁹¹ SHY (1976) *Chih-kuan* 44, p. 3a–b. ⁹² SHY (1976) *Chih-kuan* 44, p. 1b.

⁹³ Ma Tuan-lin, *Wen-hsien t'ung-kao* (c.1308, Taipei, 1964) 60, p. 549. According to the *Wen-hsien t'ung-kao*, during the T'ai-p'ing hsing-kuo reign period (976–84), initially a Monopoly Tax Commission (*Ch'ieh-huo un*) was established to take care of the tribute trade. For the distribution and sale of the foreign products on markets including the collection of taxes, a *ch'ieh-i yüan* was established in the capital. During the reign period *Ta-chung hsiang-fu* (1008–16) it was merged with the Monopoly Tax Commission.

⁹⁴ SS (1990) 268, p. 9223. See also SHY (1976) *Chih-kuan* 44, p. 2a; *Shih-huo* 55, p. 22a–b.

⁹⁵ This is suggested by Charles O. Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles in imperial China* (Stanford, 1985), p. 199 (No. 1718). It is mentioned, for example, in SS (1990) 261, p. 9043; 266, p. 9181; and 441, p. 13056.

responsible for maritime trade offices (*shih-po ssu*) and the *chüeh-i-wu*.⁹⁶ The merchants had to sell, at officially fixed prices, most, if not all, of their *hsiang-yao* to the authorities and received a certificate (*ch'üan*) instead. As a consequence, trade activity declined and the government's income in the form of cash decreased. The establishment of such a monopoly office implies that the early Sung court was obviously primarily interested in the use value of *hsiang-yao*.

This is supported by the particular form of taxation implemented by the early Sung government. Taxes were levied as commodity taxes, which meant that a certain percentage of the goods to be imported, as a rule between 10 and 20 percent, had to be delivered to the Sung authorities as tax. This was called *ch'ou-chieh*.⁹⁷ This system of levying commodity taxes was maintained throughout the dynasty, although we have indications that not only were more goods than officially designated taken from foreign merchants, but apparently also additional duties, perhaps in cash, were levied.⁹⁸ In T'ang times, for example, a so-called "anchorage tax" (*po-chiao*) had been introduced.⁹⁹ But it is not specified if this kind of tax was levied in the form of cash or commodities, or how high it was. The only reference in the general accounts on Sung maritime trade which might suggest that taxes in cash were also levied comes from the *Ling-wai tai-ta*. One entry explicitly makes a distinction between "commodity taxes" and the "levy of (regular) taxes" (*chi pi kuan nai ch'ou-chieh ping shou-shui*).¹⁰⁰ A valuation of the maritime trade balance in copper cash was, for example, implemented during the Huang-yu reign (1049–54) of Emperor Jen-tsung at the latest; for the following reign periods we possess repeated entries specifying the tax income of the *shih-po ssu* at least also in cash form specified as cash (*ch'ien*), strings (*min*), sometimes silver (*yin*), or simply a figure.¹⁰¹ Of great importance to the further development of maritime trade was what Derek Thiam Soon Heng has called the "1090 liberalization."¹⁰²

⁹⁶ SS (1990) 162, p. 3809.

⁹⁷ The *P'ing-chou k'o-t'an* explains: "For any ship that arrives, the military and fiscal commissioners, together with the supervising official of the *shih-po* [ssu] go to inspect and verify the commodities [on board] and levy taxes. This is called 'to take and send it to the capital', with ten parts as a rate." See Chu Yü, *P'ing-chou k'o-t'an* (1119, *T'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* ed.) 2, p. 1b (17). For an explanation of the term *ch'ou-chieh*, see also Fang Hao, *Chung-Hsi chiao-t'ung-shih* (Taipei, 1983), Volume 1, p. 250.

⁹⁸ See, for example, a complaint in the SS (1990) 186, p. 4566, that according to the old regulations there existed a fixed percentage of how many goods would be taken as tax and there were no harsh and excessive taxes.

⁹⁹ Wang Ch'in-jo et al., eds., *Ts'e-fu yüan-kui* (1013; *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* ed.) 91, p. 3a.

¹⁰⁰ See Chou Ch'ü-fei's *Ling-wai tai-ta* 5, p. 10a.

¹⁰¹ Ma, *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* 20, p. 201; SS (1990) 186, p. 4559. The pages prior to these entries in the *Sung-shih* describe the monetarization of the inner markets.

¹⁰² Derek Thiam Soon Heng, *Sino-Malay trade and diplomacy from the tenth through the fourteenth century* (Athens, OH, 2009), p. 48. (with reference to the SHY (1976) *Chih-kuan* 44, p. 8a–b).

From that year on basically any Chinese prefecture authority could permit Chinese ships to depart overseas, as long as the voyage had officially been registered. Chinese ships, therefore, were no longer obliged to register at ports with a *shih-po ssu*. As Derek Heng expounds, this liberalization meant that China not only was no longer dependent on the products foreigners imported but "could now shop abroad."¹⁰³ At the same time, because the Chinese government as early as the second half of the eleventh century restricted Chinese vessels from remaining overseas for more than nine months (that is, approximately one cycle of the northeast-southwest monsoon), the liberalization prompted Chinese maritime merchants to concentrate on Southeast Asia.¹⁰⁴

After 1127, a tax on overseas vessels (*hai-ch'uan shui*) was levied to be used exclusively for military purposes.¹⁰⁵ Fang Hao quotes the *Pao-ch'ing Ssu-ming chih* by Lo Chün (?-after 1228), which provides some more information about taxation in the thirteenth century. Accordingly, commodities were divided into fifteen parts; the maritime trade superintendency (*Shih-po t'i-chü ssu*) then took one part (*ch'ou i fen*) and sent it to the capital (*shang-kung*), the leader of the shipment and transportation crew (*kang-shou*) took one part for freight expenditure (*ch'uan-chiao fei*), the local officials took three parts, the bureaus of the two controllers-general (*liang ts'ui t'ing*) also took one part each, and they all bought up the goods at low prices. Consequently, seven parts were gone and the merchants had only eight parts (53.33 percent) of their original cargo at their own disposal. This is why many of them tried to evade taxation.¹⁰⁶ It is evident, too, that these taxes were levied as commodity taxes or low-price purchases. We thus have no way to assess what quantity, if any, of the taxes that were officially imposed on foreign merchants was obtained in the form of money. Consequently, also in later times, most of the Sung government's income from maritime trade derived from a resale of foreign commodities taxed and from the so-called monopoly purchases. This would imply that the government's income in the form of cash or silver came to a large extent from its own domestic merchants. This would also mean that the cash and silver to fill the state coffers gained from maritime trade was mainly withdrawn from its own society.

In addition to the official commodity tax, foreign merchants were normally obliged to sell between 40 and 60 percent of their commodities to the

¹⁰³ Heng, *Sino-Malay trade and diplomacy from the tenth through the fourteenth century*, p. 50.

¹⁰⁴ See Heng, *Sino-Malay trade and diplomacy from the tenth through the fourteenth century*, pp. 50-3. On pp. 54-63 he also provides an excellent overview of the changing tax rates after 1127.

¹⁰⁵ Ma, *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* 14, p. 147, in *Shih T'ung*, Volumes 11 and 12 (Shanghai, 1936; repr. Taipei, 1987).

¹⁰⁶ Lo Chün, *Pao-ch'ing Ssu-ming chih* (1227) 6, quoted by Fang Hao, *Chung-Hsi chiao-t'ung-shih*, Volume 1, p. 251.

government authorities at officially set prices. This system was called "harmonious purchase" (*ho-mai* or *ch'ou-mai*). The goods purchased through this system were, as a rule, paid in either cash, silver, gold or ceramics and silks.¹⁰⁷

Generally speaking, commodities were divided into coarse (*ts'u-se*) and fine (*hsi-se*) goods. Textiles, for example, belonged to the coarse, precious commodities to the fine-quality goods. The *hsiang-yao* were partly of fine and partly of coarse quality. Sometimes the categorization of one specific item was also changed from coarse to fine and vice versa. Both monopoly goods and those freely traded were taxed, and the specific tax rates varied from period to period. As a rule, these fluctuations in tax rates reflected the government's attempt to maximize profits without discouraging maritime trade by imposing such policies. Originally, the tax rate was 10 percent of the imported commodities.¹⁰⁸ In 991, the rate rose to 20 percent, but was soon lowered again to 10 percent. Under Emperor Hui-tsung coarse goods were taxed at 30 percent, fine goods as before at 10 percent.¹⁰⁹ In 1136, the rates were changed to 15 percent and 10 percent respectively. In 1144, the tax rate for aromatics was even raised to 40 percent,¹¹⁰ but, because of the merchants' complaints, the rate for some commodities was soon, in 1147, lowered again to 10 percent.¹¹¹

A certain stage of development having been reached, increasingly great revenues could be obtained from maritime trade. For example, during the period from 1087 to 1098 the average income from seaborne commerce came to 417,000 strings of cash annually (c.0.82 percent of the gross government revenue during the period from 1102 to 1111), and then rose to an annual average of 1,111,000 strings of cash (c.1.7 percent of the government revenue).¹¹²

To ensure an efficient official administration of these policies, the government established maritime trade offices (*shih-po ssu*), which were later reorganized as superintendencies of maritime trade (*shih-po t'i-chü ssu*). The offices had to survey tributary relations and were responsible for the supervision and management of the entire overseas trade, especially control over imports and exports.¹¹³ In this context, they also had to take measures against the outflow

¹⁰⁷ Fang, *Chung-Hsi chiao-t'ung-shih*, Volume 1, p. 251. ¹⁰⁸ Chu, *P'ing-chou k'o-t'an* 2, p. 1b (17).

¹⁰⁹ Roderich Ptak, "China and the trade in cloves, circa 960–1435," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113 No. 1 (January–March 1993), p. 5.

¹¹⁰ Li Hsin-ch'uan, *Chien-yen i-lai ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi* (c.1202 and 1216, Peking, 2000) 15, p. 330.

¹¹¹ Ptak, "China and the trade in cloves, circa 960–1435," p. 5. For a general overview on Sung China's maritime trade administration, see the German thesis by Ines Hennevogel, "Das Schifffahrtsamt in der Song-Zeit," in *Beamtenum und Wirtschaftspolitik in der Song-Dynastie*, ed. Dieter Kuhn with Ina Asim (Heidelberg, 1995), pp. 266–303.

¹¹² Ma, *Wen-hsien t'ung-kao* 20, p. 198.

¹¹³ Tansen Sen has summarized the main responsibilities of the Sung Maritime Trade Office as (1) taking care of tributary envoys and encouraging foreign merchants to come to China, (2) inspection of incoming and outgoing ships, (3) collection of duties and purchase of goods in kind, (4) sale and distribution of collected goods, (5) administration of the sale of foreign goods by foreign and Chinese merchants, (6) administration of Chinese overseas merchants, (7) enforcement of laws on restrictions and smuggling,

of specie, a function which became ever more important with the growing commercialization of the Chinese economy, particularly after the reforms of Wang An-shih (1021–86). As for tariffs on imports, the ships' captains were obliged to sell their commodities through these authorities, so that both imports and exports had to pass them. Only then did the merchants receive an official certificate allowing them to continue their activities. Certificates ranged from permissions to sail overseas with one's commodities (*kung-p'ing* or *kung-chü*) and land certificates for permission to trade at certain localities inside China (*lu-yin*, *hui-yin* and *ti-t'ou-yin*) to certificates with commodity lists permitting their sale in one or more districts in China.¹¹⁴ For merchants who came from places where no maritime trade offices had been established, this meant that they first had to travel to the closest one to have their cargo checked.

Government officials by no means agreed on the best and most efficient way to regulate maritime trade. Proposals included the establishment of monopoly exchange bureaus (*chiieh-i-yüan*) or market exchange offices (*shih-i-wu*), and the creation of additional maritime trade offices.¹¹⁵ Debates included questions whether foreign commodities should basically be considered consumer items and only occasionally used as an aid to finance government expenditures through the sale of monopolized goods, whether the government's income should most efficiently and solely be obtained by monopolizing all imported goods, or whether a new and more independent structure of maritime trade administration should be inaugurated.

The generally positive attitude of the Sung government towards maritime trade can also be observed through a ritual that was carried out near Ch'üan-chou before ships sailed abroad – the “praying for advantageous winds” (*ch'i-feng*) to assure a safe overseas journey.¹¹⁶ The thirteen stone inscriptions at the Chiu-jih-shan (Nine Days Mountain) in Nan-an (Ch'üan-chou), dated between 1174 and 1266, provide a lively picture of this ritual.¹¹⁷

and (8) the supervision and administration of foreign settlements. Sen, “Administration of maritime trade during the Tang and Song dynasties,” pp. 256–9.

¹¹⁴ For examples, see SHY (1976) *Chih-kuan* 44, pp. 2b, 5b–6a, 8b–9a, 34a; *Shih-huo* 36, p. 17b; 54, p. 19a–b. According to their function, the certificates can generally be subdivided into four categories.

¹¹⁵ Cf., for example, Li Tao, *tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien* (1183, Taipei, 1983) 251, p. 23a; 252, pp. 22b–23a; 254, pp. 15b–16a; 255, p. 3b.

¹¹⁶ See, for example, Chen Te-hsiu, “Ch'i-feng chu-wen,” in *Hsi-shan hsien-sheng Chen Wen-chung-kung wen-chi* 54, p. 16a–b.

¹¹⁷ Cf., for example, Li Yü-k'un, “Shih-lun Sung Yüan shih-ch'i te ch'i-feng yü chi-hai,” *Hai-chiao-shih yen-chiu* 5 (1983), pp. 65–70; Sung Hsi, “Sung Ch'üan-chou Nan'an Chiu-jih-shan shih-k'o chih yen-chiu,” *Hsiieh-shu chi-k'an* 3 No. 4 (1955), pp. 32–51; Wu Wen-liang, “Ch'üan-chou Chiu-jih-shan mo-ya shih-k'o,” *Wen-wu* 11 (1962), pp. 33–47; Fang Hao, “Sung Ch'üan-chou teng ti chih ch'i-feng,” *T'ai-ta wen-shih che-hsiieh-pao* 3 (December 1951), pp. 75–118, in *Fang Hao liu-shih tzu-ting-kao*, Volume hsia, pp. 1201–46; Li, *Ch'üan-chou yü wo-kuo chung-ku te hai-shang chiao-t'ung*, pp. 111–13.

Institutional structures

During the T'ang, maritime trade was officially regulated by maritime trade commissioners (*shih-po-shih*). The date of the first appearance of this title was 714, when it was conferred on a certain Chou Ch'ing-li who was concurrently controller-general (*t'ung-p'an*).¹¹⁸ Although some scholars have argued that a maritime trade office (*ssu*) had been established as early as the eighth century, this probably was not the case.¹¹⁹ The trade commissioners were appointed ad hoc; originally, the duties of the maritime trade commissioners were mostly fulfilled concurrently by the prefects of Kuang-chou. As the post of the maritime trade commissioner was a very lucrative position, vesting the office bearers with many privileges, it is not surprising that power struggles occurred in relation to it. Against the background of rampant corruption among the responsible local officials in Lingnan, the T'ang court eventually decided to appoint eunuchs or palace attendants (*nei-shih*) as maritime trade commissioners to supervise the purchase of foreign commodities to meet the demands of the court. This, however, does not mean that the T'ang court suddenly became primarily interested in foreign trade as a financial source of revenue. The primary interest of the T'ang rulers remained the supply of exotic goods and luxury items. The idea of maritime trade as a financial source emerged only in the course of the tenth century, and it only became the main impetus for the promotion of seaborne trade with the introduction of Emperor Shen-tsung's (r. 1068–85) New Policies.¹²⁰

In the early years of the Northern Sung, a maritime trade administration system similar to that of the T'ang was adopted.¹²¹ But, as will be shown below, the Sung government sought to increase its control over seaborne trade and step-by-step integrated it into its central finance system.¹²² The fiscal

¹¹⁸ In the *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei*, the title is first mentioned for the year 714, and according to the *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao*, one of the first maritime trade commissioners (*shih-po-shih*) was appointed in 763. Wang et al., *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei* 546, p. 2b. Ma, *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* 62, p. 563.

¹¹⁹ Wang, "T'ang maritime trade," p. 30, argues that the character *shih* ("commissioner") was apparently later (mis-)interpreted as *ssu* ("office"). For the maritime trade commissioners at Kuang-chou, see also Huang Ch'i-ch'en, ed., *Kuang-tung hai-shang ssu-ch'ou chih lu shih* (Canton, 2003), pp. 139–76.

¹²⁰ Cf., for example, *SHY* (1976) *Chih-kuan* 44, p. 27a.

¹²¹ Wang, "T'ang maritime trade," p. 35. The *SHY* (1976) says: "Originally, when in Canton the Office (of Maritime Trade) was established, a prefect (*chih-chou*) was installed as commissioner (*shih*), a controller-general (*t'ung-p'an*) as administrative assistant (*p'an-kuan*), and a fiscal commissioner (*chuan-yün-shih*) of the Fiscal Bureau to superintend and control all the affairs. In addition (*yu*), three groups of eunuchs (*nei-shih*) with three persons each were sent as administrative-class officials (*ching-ch'ao-kuan*) particularly in order to supervise (*chuan ling chih*) [the affairs of the Maritime Trade Office]." *SHY* (1976) *Chih-kuan* 44, p. 1a.

¹²² For a discussion of this gradual development, see Liao Ta-k'o, "Sung-ch'ao kuan-fang hai-wai mao-i chih-tu yen-chiu" (diss., Hsia-men ta-hsüeh, 1988), pp. 28–40. Angela Schottenhammer, *Das*

commissions (*chuan-yün ssu*) played a major role in this process. At the same time, the Sung government found itself involved in a conflict between strict central control and the demands of local autonomy. Its principal aim was to organize the maritime trade administration more effectively in the interests of the state. And to reach this goal, as well as to control corruption, a strict centralized supervision was not always the most appropriate method to be adopted. Also, the reorganization of the maritime trade offices as superintendencies has to be seen in the context of more efficient control and management of maritime trade (see next section for more details).

During T'ang times there was a single maritime trade commissioner in Kuang-chou, although Yang-chou and Ming-chou were also open ports where foreign ships could call. In the Sung dynasty, in all, ten maritime trade offices (*shih-po ssu*) – either superintendencies of maritime trade (*shih-po t'i-chü ssu*) or maritime trade bureaus (*shih-po wu*) – were opened at different times (see Map 2). Whereas in Kuang-tung and Fu-chien maritime trade offices were established, in Liang-che six maritime trade bureaus were opened at different times and locations.¹²³ The history of each office is complex – sometimes even the sources are partly contradictory – and can therefore not be treated here in detail. Offices were often closed, reopened, shifted to another location, closed again, and so on, mostly due to questions of efficiency and control. A few examples and Table 13 below may suffice to provide for a general survey.¹²⁴

The administration of the maritime trade office lay in the hands of special commissioners, the maritime trade commissioners (*shih*) or superintendents (*t'i-chü*) of maritime trade. Their duties are described in a very general manner as being responsible for everything that had to do with maritime trade: promoting maritime trade, attracting and taking care of foreign merchants, taxing foreign commodities, and regulating the redistribution and sale of foreign commodities within China. To secure the smooth development of trade activities, the maritime trade offices also had the right to settle cases of conflict between merchants, as well as those concerning their private property.¹²⁵

In the year 971, the maritime trade office of Kuang-chou was reorganized to secure for the government a larger share of the profits attainable through the

songzeitliche Quanzhou im Spannungsfeld zwischen Zentralregierung und maritimem Handel: Unerwartete Konsequenzen des zentralstaatlichen Zugriffs auf den Reichtum einer Küstenregion (Stuttgart, 2002), pp. 73–87.

¹²³ Shih Wen-chi, "Sung-tai shih-po ssu te chih-she," *Sung-shih yen-chiu chi: Ti wu chi*, ed. Sung-shih tso-t'an-hui (Taipei, 1970), p. 377.

¹²⁴ The best survey is provided by Shih, "Sung-tai shih-po ssu te chih-she," pp. 341–402.

¹²⁵ Cf. SS (1990) 167, p. 3971; Shih, "Sung-tai shih-po ssu te chih-she," pp. 341–402; Shih Wen-chi, "Sung-tai shih-po ssu te chih-ch'üan," *Sung-shih yen-chiu chi: Ti ch'i chi*, ed. Sung-shih tso-t'an-hui (Taipei, 1974), pp. 481–556; Fujita Toyohachi, "Sōdai no shihaku shi oyobi shihaku jōrei," *Tōyō gakubō* 7 No. 2 (1917), pp. 159–264; Lu Wei, "Sung-tai hai-wai mao-i ho Tung-ya ke-kuo te kuan-hsi," *Hai-chiao-shih yen-chiu* 1 (1985), pp. 12–20.



Map 2. Seaports and naval bases in the Southern Sung (1127–1279). Source: Lo Jung-pang, "Maritime commerce and its relation to the Sung navy," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 12 No. 1 (January 1969), p. 65.



Map 2. (*cont.*)

Table 13. *Maritime trade offices (shih-po ssu) and maritime trade bureaus (shih-po wu)*

Circuit	Location/city	Kind of office	Date of establishment
Kuang-nan-tung	Kuang-chou	<i>shih-po ssu</i> (office repeatedly abolished and re-established)	971
Fu-chien	Ch'üan-chou	<i>shih-po ssu</i> (office repeatedly abolished and re-established)	1087
Liang-che	Hang-chou	first <i>shih-po ssu</i> , later changed to <i>shih-po wu</i> (offices repeatedly abolished and re-established)	989; 992 (<i>Ch'un-bua</i> 3) transferred to Ming-chou; 993, re-established in Hang-chou; 1076, abolished etc.; after 1132 only <i>shih-po wu</i>
Liang-che	Ming-chou, Ting-hai-hsien	first <i>shih-po ssu</i> , later changed to <i>shih-po wu</i> (offices repeatedly abolished and re-established)	992; after 1132 only <i>shih-po wu</i>
Liang-che	Shang-hai	<i>shih-po ssu</i>	1074; 1152 abolished; re-established 1169(?)
Liang-che	Hsiu-chou, Hua-t'ing-hsien	first <i>shih-po wu</i> later changed to <i>shih-po ssu</i> (1132), then again to <i>shih-po wu</i> (office repeatedly abolished and re-established)	1113; 1130 transferred to Ch'ing-lung-chen; 1132 as <i>shih-po ssu</i> ; after 1166 only <i>shih-po wu</i>
Liang-che	Ch'ing-lung-chen (T'ung-hui-chen)	<i>shih-po wu</i>	1130
Liang-che	Wen-chou	<i>shih-po wu</i>	1132 or before
Liang-che	Chiang-yin-chün	<i>shih-po wu</i>	1145
Ching-tung-tung	Mi-chou, Pan-ch'iao-chen	<i>shih-po ssu</i>	1088

rapidly increasing maritime trade. Only a few years later, between 976 and 983, the trade was declared a state monopoly and private trading with foreigners was more or less forbidden. At about the same time, in the reign of T'ai-tsung, a general Monopoly Office (*ch'üeh-shu*) was established in the capital, and orders were issued that all foreign aromatics and goods of value imported into China through the ports of either Kuang-chou, Ch'üan-chou, or

Liang-che (Chekiang) circuit, or those that arrived via Chiao-chih (Tongkin), had to be deposited in government storehouses.¹²⁶

In 989, a second maritime trade office was opened in Hang-chou to handle the trade which flowed through the ports of the east coast, from the north and northeast (Japan, Po-hai, Korea). In 992, however, this office was transferred to Ting-hai hsien in Ming-chou (modern Ning-po). At the request of the merchants, in 999, maritime trade offices were established in both Ming-chou and Hang-chou. Excavations in 1978 and 1979 discovered remains of a complete set of maritime trade office buildings at Ming-chou. At the southeast corner was the Lai-an Pavilion, the office which issued the official certificates for foreign trading vessels without which they could not dock at the maritime trade office. The area from the maritime trade office to the Ling Bridge was the Chiang-hsia quay – named after the Sung dynasty Chiang-hsia Temple. The excavation of the three Sung quays at Ming-chou provided detailed information on the location, size, and history of this important port.¹²⁷

In 1074, it was proposed to abolish the maritime trade office in Kuang-chou and to merge it with the local market exchange bureau, but these plans were eventually given up. Between 1080 and 1102 the offices in Ming-chou and Hang-chou were both temporarily abolished and in 1127 they were put under the control of the Fiscal Commission. The reason, it seems, is that Emperor Kao-tsung, who obviously was not well informed about maritime trade, declared most of the items imported from abroad to be useless and wasteful luxuries. Except for ivory (to be used for scepters) and rhinoceros horn (for belt buckles), he ordered that the import of other goods like carnelian should be stopped, whereupon the offices were closed.¹²⁸

But they were reopened in 1128, because the local people had complained and many businessmen had gone bankrupt. In 1132 the two maritime trade offices of Liang-che in Hang-chou and Ming-chou were moved to Hua-t'ing county in Hsiu-chou, located closer to the Yangtze estuary, and the two offices (*ssu*) were never reopened thereafter. Instead, the government established so-called maritime trade bureaus (*shih-po un*) in Hang-chou and Ming-chou under the supervision and control of the head office in Hsiu-chou. The office in Ming-chou was maintained until the end of the Southern Sung dynasty, because it was of great importance for the management of the trade with Japan and Korea. A maritime trade office was never established in the city of Yang-chou, which had been a great "international" entrepôt during T'ang times, because the city had never completely recovered from the massacre in the ninth

¹²⁶ SS (1990) 186, p. 4559.

¹²⁷ Lin, Tu, and Green, "Waterfront excavations at Dongmenkou," pp. 308–9.

¹²⁸ SS (1990) 186, p. 4565; Wang, *Yü-ti chi-sheng* 130, p. 3b.

century and, furthermore, because its port on the Yangtze River was not located favourably for foreign merchants.

According to Ming and Ch'ing sources, a Maritime Trade Office was also opened in Shanghai-chen in 1074, although Sung sources do not mention such an office there.¹²⁹ Apparently, the Shanghai office was again abolished in 1159 and re-established at some date before 1269, when Tung K'ai (1226–?) was appointed as the local maritime trade commissioner.¹³⁰

Although by the eleventh century Ch'üan-chou had already become a major maritime trading port, a local maritime trade office was only opened there in 1087. This means that until 1087 all merchants who imported goods through the port of Ch'üan-chou had first to call at either Kuang-chou, Ming-chou, or Hang-chou to have their cargo checked by the authorities. As this was a very time-consuming and expensive procedure, many tried to avoid this trip by conducting trade illegally. As a consequence, merchants and not a few local officials made enormous profits, while the state received nothing. Apparently, however, the central government did not regard this as a major problem before the middle of the eleventh century, when the fiscal situation became more critical. Despite a proposal in 1072 to establish a maritime trade office at Ch'üan-chou by Hsüeh Hsiang (1016–81), a financial expert and an ally of

¹²⁹ Yü Yüeh and Ying Pao-shih, comp., *Shang-hai hsien-chih* (Ch'ing, *T'ung-chih* (1862–74) ed.) 1, pp. 1a–18b, p. 1b, in *Chung-kuo fang-chih ts'ung-shu: Hua-chung ti-fang* (Taipei, 1975) 169, p. 116. Shih, "Sung-tai shih-po ssu te chih-she," p. 358, also cites Cheng Jo-tseng, *Chiang-nan ching-lüe*, 4. This claim, however, is not included in a copy of the original Ming edition: Cheng Jo-tseng, *Chiang-nan ching-lüe* (*Ssu-ku ch'üan-shu chen-pen erh-chi* ed.). According to the biography of Tung K'ai (b. 1226), the *shih-po ssu* of Shanghai began with his period of office in 1269. But according to the *Sung-chiang fu-chih*, 11, by Ku Ch'ing, it was abolished in 1159 and reopened in 1169. Ku Ch'ing, *Sung-chiang fu-chih*, in *Chung-kuo fang-chih ts'ung-shu: Hua-chung ti-fang* 10, comp. Sun Hsing-yen and Sung Ju-lin (Taipei, 1970). Ts'ao Hsüeh-ch'üan, *I-t'ung ming-sheng chih* (microfilm photoreprint of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek; Rare Books National Library, Peiping) 10, p. 26b, also refers to a *shih-po ssu* in Shanghai. It says: "In the beginning, there was a place in Hua-t'ing called Hua-t'ing-hai being located above sea level. Because many foreigners (*yang-jen*) came there and because it was a place of concourse for all the merchant ships, it gradually developed into a big town. When it came under the jurisdiction of the Sung dynasty, a superintendency of maritime trade (*shih-po t'i-chü ssu*) and a monopoly exchange office (*chüeh-huo ch'ang*) were established there, and it was called Shanghai-chen . . . At the beginning of the Sung dynasty, all the foreign trading ships came directly down the river to Ch'ing-lung-chen. Later, because the flow of the river gradually became too narrow, the trading ships went ashore at the present district to undergo the administrative regulations. This is why it was declared Shanghai-hsien district (i.e. a place ruled by a magistrate), the administration being located south of the old maritime trade office (*shih-po ssu*)." 10, p. 28b: "The big sea lies seventy *li* in the east of the district. Starting in the north, south of Chia-ting, then arriving at Hua-t'ing, which is the district under which the Sung-chiang flows together with the Huang-p'u . . . During Sung and Yüan times, the people bringing tribute all were cleared at the maritime trade office at Ch'ing-lung." In contrast, most sources uniformly speak of a local monopoly tax commission (*chüeh-huo-ch'ang*). Thus it is possible that this monopoly tax commission either had similar powers as a *shih-po ssu* or was transformed into one some time during the Southern Sung dynasty, and this may be the reason why it is not (yet) mentioned in Sung sources.

¹³⁰ See Shih, "Sung-tai shih-po ssu te chih-she," p. 358, with reference to Ku, *Sung-chiang fu-chih* 11.

the reformer Wang An-shih, it took another fifteen years before this happened. The reasons for this delay involved controversies between reformers and anti-reformers, as well as between local and central officials, especially that between Wang Tzu-ching, the assistant finance commissioner of Fu-chien, and Ch'en Ch'eng (1015–86), the prefect of Ch'üan-chou. Only after Ch'en Ch'eng's death and the accession of Emperor Che-tsung to the throne¹³¹ was an eventual decision made at the request of the Finance Minister, Li Ch'ang (1027–90).¹³² As in the case of the maritime trade office of Liang-che, the Ch'üan-chou office was repeatedly temporarily abolished.¹³³ This happened first in the 1090s, as a result of corruption and inefficiency in dealing with it. But it was reopened in 1103, apparently closed down again between 1107 and 1112, reopened in 1112, closed again in 1127, reopened in 1128, closed in 1132, and reopened in 1142. In 1127, the authority of the maritime trade offices in Liang-che and Fu-chien was transferred to the Fiscal Commission, an office which was directly integrated into the central government finance administration. In the case of the maritime trade office in Ch'üan-chou, its fate apparently also depended on who was the responsible chief councilor (*tsai-hsiang*) in the central government. In this context, Ts'ai Ching (1046–1126), an influential central-government official who was at the same time of local origin, obviously played a key role: it is at least striking that when he was appointed as chief councilor, the office was opened, and when he was dismissed, the office was closed again. The transfer of the authority of the maritime trade office of Ch'üan-chou in 1132 to the tea supervisorate (*t'i-chü ch'a-shih ssu*) was also probably due to problems of efficiency and to the lack of revenues and a shortage of competent, loyal officials after all the years of war with the Jurchen.

One year after the establishment of a superintendency of maritime trade in Ch'üan-chou, in 1087, another office was opened in Pan-ch'iao-chen in Mi-chou (Ching-tung-tung), shortly afterwards given prefectural status and renamed Chiao-hsi county and located on Chiao-chou Bay close to the modern

¹³¹ For details cf. Hugh R. Clark, "The politics of trade and the establishment of the Quanzhou trade superintendency," in *Chung-kuo yü hai-shang ssu-ch'ou chih lu: Lien-ho kuo chiao k'o wen tsu-chih hai-shang ssu-ch'ou chih lu tsung-bo k'ao-ch'a Quanzhou kuo-chi hsüeh-shu t'ao-lun hui-i lun-wen-chi*, ed. Lien-ho kuo chiao k'o wen tsu-chih hai-shang ssu-ch'ou chih lu tsung-ho k'ao-ch'a Quanzhou hsüeh-shu t'ao-lun hui tsu-chih wei-yüan-hui pien (Fu-chou, 1994), pp. 375–94; Schottenhammer, *Das songzeitliche Quanzhou im Spannungsfeld zwischen Zentralregierung und maritimem Handel*, pp. 88–99.

¹³² The controversy between Wang Tzu-ching and Ch'en Ch'eng is described in detail by Ch'en Kuan in his *Ch'en-liao chai-chi*, preserved in the *Yung-lo ta-tien* 3141, pp. 18b–19a.

¹³³ The office was apparently established as a superintendency right from the beginning. In 1091, a certain Ch'en Shen-fu (or Chen Tun-fu?) was appointed as superintendent concurrently holding the post of a local prefect. Yang Ch'ing-chiang et. al., comp., *Fu-chien shih-po jen-wu-lu* (Ch'üan-chou, 1987); Schottenhammer, *Das songzeitliche Quanzhou im Spannungsfeld zwischen Zentralregierung und maritimem Handel*, pp. 122 et seq. and list of superintendents and officials, pp. 145–8.

city of Ch'ing-tao on the southern coast of Shantung. During the Sui, T'ang, and Five Dynasties, the principal ports for trade with Korea had been Teng-chou and Lai-chou on the northern coast of Shantung. But at the beginning of the Northern Sung, Mi-chou gradually took their place as the most important harbor in North China, and trade with Korea through the ports of Teng-chou and Lai-chou was even prohibited. The reason was that these ports lay very close to the territory of one of Sung China's major enemies, the Khitan Liao.

We have seen that the maritime trade office was moved from Liang-che to Hua-t'ing-hsien in Hsiu-chou in 1132. Already in 1113, however, a maritime trade bureau had been established there and in 1131, after a futile attempt to transfer this maritime trade bureau to T'ung-hui-ch'en (Ch'ing-lung-ch'en), located about thirty kilometers north of Hua-t'ing, a second maritime trade bureau was opened in T'ung-hui-ch'en. Whereas the maritime trade office of Hsiu-chou was eventually abolished in 1166 because of corruption and was never re-established, the maritime trade bureau was maintained until 1195 and, after a temporary closure, apparently reopened in 1205.

We do not know when exactly the maritime trade bureau in Wen-chou was established. It had already been opened by 1132 and in 1195 it was abolished at the same time as the one in Hsiu-chou. The maritime trade bureau in Chiang-yin-chün, close to the Yangtze estuary in Chekiang, was opened only in 1145, even though maritime trade had been flourishing there long before. But about half a century later, in 1195, it too was closed down.

With the exception of the maritime trade office in Mi-chou, all were located south of the Yangtze River. In this context, it is also important to note that the loss of the former northern circuits to the Jurchen Chin had consequences for the development of maritime trade. It shifted the center of trade, resources, and consumption to the south. Merchants were cut off from the former waterways (rivers and canals) to the north, including the markets located there. With the transfer of the capital from K'ai-feng to Hang-chou the main areas of consumption and consequently the major markets were moved to Hang-chou and its hinterland. This reorientation from the north to the south clearly increased the importance of the southeastern ports as the centers of trade and turnover. The rise of maritime trade along the south and southeast China coast in the course of the eleventh century is also reflected in the number and variety of foreign merchants coming to southern ports – not to speak of a general gradual economic shift to the south, as may be surmised from agricultural, mining, and handicrafts production figures in South China.¹³⁴ Consequently, after the fall of the Northern Sung, most maritime

¹³⁴ The silver tax ration, for example, developed from 30.70 percent (north:south) to 18.82 percent. For further details, see Shih, "Sung-tai shih-po ssu te chih-she," pp. 381–5.

commercial activities went on through the ports along the south and southeast Chinese coast.

Local autonomy versus central control

In the course of the Sung dynasty, the maritime trade offices – and later the superintendencies of maritime trade – gradually became more closely integrated into the state's finance administration. Simultaneously, however, the government found itself in a dilemma about how to regulate maritime trade most effectively without causing damage and risking losses through over-strict government intervention, but at the same time keeping illegal trade activities under control. Should maritime trade activities be strictly controlled by central finance officials or should the responsible offices and officers be vested with greater local autonomy and powers? The policy of the government to use maritime trade to fill state coffers is perhaps best reflected in an 1132 entry from the *Sung hui-yao* (A draft compendium of Sung documents), which says that “the importance of the laws and regulations set up by the Emperor Shen-tsung lay in facilitating the merchants' trade and commerce in order to help [to finance] the government's expenditure.”¹³⁵ The maritime trade offices and superintendencies were the authorities that had to guarantee this official purpose.

At the beginning of the Sung dynasty, local officials such as prefects, controllers-general, and administrative assistants acted concurrently as maritime trade commissioners.¹³⁶ Although these officials were dispatched from the central government, they could, in reality, act relatively autonomously. The official position of the administrative assistant was abolished, at least temporarily, between 971 and 976,¹³⁷ and three groups of palace attendants (*nei-shih*) were dispatched as fiscal commissioners of the central Finance Commission, in order to supervise all the affairs related to maritime trade as overseers-general (*tsung-ling*).¹³⁸ It was at this point that the central Finance Commission suddenly came into the arena.

Emperor T'ai-tsung further strengthened the central control of seaborne commerce and the powers of the finance commissioners. In 987, he sent eight eunuch palace attendants with an imperial letter to the countries of the South Seas inviting foreigners to trade with China.¹³⁹ Thus local officials were still formally appointed to take care of the concerns of the maritime trade office,

¹³⁵ SHY (1976) *Chih-kuan* 44, p. 27a–b.

¹³⁶ SHY (1976) *Chih-kuan* 44, p. 1b; Ma, *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* 62, p. 563; Chang Ju-yü, *Shan-t'ang ch'üan-shu k'ao-shu* (Ssu-k'üan ch'üan-shu ed.) *bou-chi* 13, pp. 1a–30a, 18b.

¹³⁷ SHY (1976) *Chih-kuan* 44, p. 1b, says, “terminate the office of administrative assistant” (*pa p'an-kuan chih ming*).

¹³⁸ SHY (1976) *Chih-kuan* 44, p. 1b.

¹³⁹ SHY (1976) *Chih-kuan* 44, p. 2b.

but in reality they apparently no longer disposed of much authority, which now lay in the hands of the palace attendants as the finance commissioners.

However, a clear division of their areas of responsibility still seems not to have existed at that time, although the government at least recognized that this court-dominated but locally organized regulation of maritime trade was unsatisfactory. Aware of this administrative problem, in the year 1001 the Emperor Chen-tsung (r. 997–1022) tried to reform the system. He recalled the palace attendants and approved the request of Li Ying-chi that, henceforth, the aim should be to appoint finance commissioners (*san-ssu shih*), vice commissioners (*san-ssu fu-shih*), and administrative assistants of the central Finance Commission or of the finance commission (*san-ssu*) in the circuit, and to select incorruptible administrative clerks to deal with the duties of the maritime trade office in Kuang-chou.¹⁴⁰ This step hints at the range of problems with which the government was confronted in its financial administration of maritime trade. Stricter central control should have alleviated the situation, but the government was seeking an ideal solution to provide a balance between strict central control and relative local autonomy. In the past, maritime trade had been managed by local officials who often knew the local conditions much better than the officials dispatched by the central government. In such a situation, the government was dependent on local officials and consequently vested them with a fair degree of autonomy. On the other hand, too much local autonomy immensely increased the danger of corruption and illegal enrichment. Consequently, they tried to “infiltrate” central officials into the local offices, which as institutions would remain more or less independent, but would be rendered more efficient through central control. Both Chen-tsung and Jen-tsung (r. 1022–63) sought to make the officials of the maritime trade offices increasingly subordinate to central-government control in this way. But they did not establish a clear division of the areas of responsibility.

In 1080, Emperor Shen-tsung sent fiscal commissioners to Kuang-tung, Kuang-hsi, Fu-chien, and Liang-che in order to supervise the proper implementation of maritime trade laws. These officials were not simply central court officials but financial experts (*ts'ao-ch'en chien ling*). The maritime trade administration thus changed from a system of “prefects having responsibility as a concurrent duty” (*chou-chün chien ling*) to a system of “financial experts” (*ts'ao-ch'en chien ling*).¹⁴¹ Under this latter system, the maritime trade offices

¹⁴⁰ SHY (1976) *Chih-kuan* 44, p. 3b.

¹⁴¹ Liao, “Sung-ch'ao kuan-fang hai-wai mao-i chih-tu,” pp. 28–40; Chang, *Shan-f'ang ch'ün-shu k'ao-suo bou-chi* 13, p. 19a. See also Wang, *Yü-ti chih-sheng* 130, p. 3b; Ma, *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* 62, p. 563; Li, *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien* 368, pp. 23b, 24b; SS (1990) 167, p. 3964; P'an Tzu-mu, *Chi-tsuan yüan-bai* (*Ssu-k'ü ch'üan-shu* ed.) 34, pp. 18b–19a; Fu Tsung-wen, “Tz'u-t'ung-kang shih ch'u-t'an (chuan-chu lien-tsai chih i),” *Hai-chiao-shih yen-chiu* 1 (1991), p. 92; “Tz'u-t'ung-kang shih ch'u-t'an (chuan-chu lien-tsai chih erh),” *Hai-chiao-shih yen-chiu* 2 (1991), pp. 105–51.

gradually developed into an independent organ or subdivision of the government's fiscal administration for the respective circuit. At about the same time or only briefly afterwards, the finance commissioners on duty in the maritime trade offices were appointed as superintendents of maritime trade. In contrast to the regular finance commissioners, who acted merely on behalf of the central government's State Finance Commission, these superintendents had to combine the roles of financial expert and maritime trade specialist. They can be regarded as professional maritime trade administrators. Seen against this background, we can correctly only speak of superintendencies of maritime trade starting from c. 1080. According to the *P'ing-chou k'o-t'an*, this system was not established in all three provinces before the beginning of the Ch'ung-ning era; that is, from 1102 to 1106.¹⁴² With the appointment of the superintendents, the autonomy and the powers of the superintendencies seem to have increased, a situation which now gave rise to complaints among the central officials. Generally speaking, the government sought to select officials who had proved their competence and loyalty in a previous central office, such as the Finance Commission, and then vested them with a considerable degree of authority and local autonomy, but simultaneously limited their term in office.¹⁴³

In practice, however, given the lucrative profits to be derived from maritime trade, local autonomy was still often misused by officials for their private profit. Consequently, the system of the superintendents was repeatedly, if temporarily, abolished and the government again reverted to stricter central control and supervision. With the state's increasing financial problems in the last decades of the twelfth century, the necessity of drawing more financial resources from maritime trade became more pressing for the government; at the same time corruption and illegal trade continued to flourish. But the government did not simply revert to strict central control. Instead, we can observe that, at the Ch'üan-chou superintendency, superintendents increasingly held concurrent positions as local prefects (*chih-chou*). With the exception of Lü Yung-chung, who held the positions of local prefect and superintendent of maritime trade in 1143, these concurrent postings all occurred in the thirteenth century.¹⁴⁴ In Kuang-chou, with some exceptions, the superintendents no longer held positions in the local government, but were directly dispatched

¹⁴² Chu, *P'ing-chou k'o-t'an* 2, p. 1a.

¹⁴³ Schottenhammer, *Das songzeitliche Quanzhou im Spannungsfeld zwischen Zentralregierung und maritimem Handel*, pp. 73–87.

¹⁴⁴ Schottenhammer, *Das songzeitliche Quanzhou im Spannungsfeld zwischen Zentralregierung und maritimem Handel*, pp. 120–50. Starting with Sun Meng-kuan (1200–57; period of office 1228–34), almost every superintendent of maritime trade concurrently served as the local prefect. In the *Ch'ing-k'ou ch'i-chiu chuan* (*Shou-sheng-ko ts'ung-shu* ed.) 7, p. 15a, Su Hsien (1118–83) is said to have held the positions of both local prefect and superintendent of maritime trade. But the sources are contradictory on this point.

from the imperial court in order to serve in this office specifically.¹⁴⁵ Only in exceptional cases did local officials continue to take over the responsibility. This system was basically maintained until, in 1275, once again controllers-general – that is, local officials – were appointed.¹⁴⁶ This contrasted with Fu-chien, where a fair degree of local autonomy under central control was guaranteed by giving the superintendents' concurrent positions as prefects. But in Kuang-tung, central control seems to have gained the upper hand in order to guarantee the benefits of maritime trade for state purposes.

At the same time, another striking development was under way: the increasing number of members of the imperial clan who acted as superintendents of maritime trade in Fu-chien, and the involvement of the imperial clan in maritime affairs in general.

Involvement of the imperial clan

The involvement of the imperial clan in maritime trade can best be viewed in the history of Ch'üan-chou and its superintendency of maritime trade. At the beginning of the Southern Sung dynasty, the Western and Southern Outer Offices of Clan Affairs (*Hsi-, Nan-wai tsung-cheng ssu*) were re-established in 1129 in Fu-chien – the Western Office in Fu-chou and the Southern Office in Ch'üan-chou.¹⁴⁷ As a consequence, clan members had easy and direct access to maritime trade activities.

The first striking fact is the number of imperial clan members who were appointed superintendents of maritime trade in Ch'üan-chou – in all ten of the eighty-seven superintendents who held the office under the Southern Sung; that is, about 11 percent. Second, already at the beginning of the second third of the twelfth century, it had become evident that clan members were directly involved in maritime trade as private persons. Some of them personally owned oceangoing junks; others tried to use their position to influence

¹⁴⁵ Huang, *Kuang-tung hai-shang ssu-ch'ou chih lu shih*, p. 270. Huang divides the administration of maritime trade at Kuang-chou into three major periods: (1) 971–1080, the administration was for the most part concurrently carried out by local officials, such as prefects; (2) 1080–1125 (end of the Hui-tsung reign), the administration was generally carried out by centrally dispatched officials of the Fiscal Commission; and (3) 1125–end of the dynasty, the *shih-po shih* were, as a rule, all specialists directly dispatched from the court (*chuan-chih kuan-yüan*).

¹⁴⁶ *SS* (1990) 47, p. 930.

¹⁴⁷ For further details, see John W. Chaffee, *Branches of heaven: A history of the imperial clan of Sung China* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), esp. 234–42; John W. Chaffee, "The impact of the Song imperial clan on the overseas trade of Quanzhou," in *The emporium of the world: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000–1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 2000), pp. 13–46; Fu Tsung-wen, "Hou-chu ku ch'uan – Sung-chi Nan-wai tsung-ssu hai-wai ching-shang te wu-cheng," *Hai-chiao-shih yen-chiu* 2 (1989), pp. 77–83.

overseas merchants, even illegally seizing ships or falsifying records.¹⁴⁸ As official administrators of maritime trade, the clan members had a direct impact on the development of overseas trade and they had even better opportunities to engage in such activities themselves. Chao Yen-hou and Chao Ch'ung-tu (1175–1230) were praised for benefiting maritime trade and filling the coffers of the superintendency.¹⁴⁹ Together with the prefect of Ch'üan-chou, Chen Te-hsiu, Chao Ch'ung-tu tried to abolish the official practice of taking goods from the foreign merchants in the name of "harmonious purchase." Such measures had had serious effects on the development of maritime trade and had angered many merchants involved. As a result of Chao Ch'ung-tu's and Chen Te-hsiu's policies, the number of ships is said to have tripled over the following three years from 1217 to 1219.¹⁵⁰ But not all clansmen fulfilled their duties in the interest of the superintendency. In 1213, for example, Chao Pu-hsi was dismissed because he had frequently seized merchants' ships and then falsified the records.¹⁵¹

The involvement of the clan in maritime trade became even more evident, when, in 1974, a late Sung oceangoing ship was discovered at Hou-chu, about ten kilometers outside the modern city of Ch'üan-chou. It has been argued that the ship belonged to the Southern Office imperial clan, as, of the ninety-six items on board, nineteen were labeled "Southern Family" (*Nan-chia*) and one "Southern Family registry" (*Nan-chia chi-hao*). Other labels clearly referred to clan princely houses, such as *An-chün* for the Prince of An-chün, some others even to individual clan families.¹⁵² According to another argument, the ship belonged to the P'u family of P'u Shou-keng.¹⁵³ While there is convincing evidence for both arguments, it is incontestable that the shipwreck and its cargo can serve as archaeological evidence for the direct involvement of the imperial clan in maritime trade. For even if the ship itself belonged to the P'u family and not to the clan, most of the commodities on board appear to have been destined for clan members.

¹⁴⁸ Chao Shih-k'an, at that time administrator of the Western and Southern Office together with Chao Shih-hsüeh (1108–62), had forced a Chang-chou merchant, Wang Ch'üung, to sell his ship to him. Chao Shih-hsüeh, too, had illegally seized a merchant's ship. When the local prefect of Ch'üan-chou, Fan Ju-kuei (1102–60), in 1159 tried to regulate this affair, he was slandered by Chao Shih-hsüeh and, eventually, removed from office. This story is explained by John W. Chaffee in *Branches of heaven*, pp. 153–4. See also SHY (1976) *Chib-kuan* 20, pp. 30a–31a; Chu Hsi, *Chu-tzu ch'üan-chi* 89; cited by Li Yü-k'un, *Ch'üan-chou hai-wai chiao-t'ung shih-lüe* (Hsia-men, 1992), p. 90.

¹⁴⁹ Liu K'o-chuang, *Hou-ts'un hsien-sheng ta ch'üan-chi* (*Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* ed.) 169, p. 12a.

¹⁵⁰ Chen, *Chen Wen-chung-kung wen-chi* 43, p. 33a–b. ¹⁵¹ SHY (1976) *Chib-kuan* 75, p. 2a–b.

¹⁵² See the argumentation of Fu, "Hou-chu ku ch'üan: Sung-chi Nan-wai tsung-ssu hai-wai ching-shang te wu-cheng," pp. 77–83, which was also taken up by Chaffee, *Branches of heaven*, p. 237, and "The impact of the Song imperial clan," pp. 33–5.

¹⁵³ Chuang, *Hai-shang-chi*, p. 283.

Another question which has been widely discussed when investigating the impact of the Sung imperial clan on the development of maritime trade is whether or not the costs of the support of clan members from the Southern Office of Clan Affairs, after the latter had been re-established in Ch'üan-chou in 1129, were actually the cause of the economic decline of Ch'üan-chou in the thirteenth century. Recent scholarship has convincingly argued that, even though the fiscal burden that the imperial clan imposed on the local government should certainly not be underestimated, the costs per se cannot be considered a primary cause for Ch'üan-chou's decline. If the financial support of clan members had in fact constituted a major problem for the further development of maritime trade, the question of the costs of allowances for clan members would have appeared earlier. Instead, the clan was already being supported throughout the period of prosperity of the early Southern Sung, and only when the revenue drawn from maritime trade decreased did the problem of too much money being spent on imperial clan members arise.¹⁵⁴ The reason for the economic decline of seaborne commerce in Ch'üan-chou must, therefore, be sought somewhere else.

When the government was confronted with ever-increasing financial problems after the late twelfth century, it did not simply revert to a strict central control of maritime trade or cut down the allowances for clan members. Instead, the superintendents were vested with more power and authority by being granted concurrent positions as prefects. In addition, increasing numbers of clan members were appointed as superintendents. Not only is this evidence for the direct involvement of imperial clan members in maritime trade, but it also indicates that the government did not simply adopt an "anti-foreign-trade" attitude, but rather still regarded maritime trade as a financial source to be tapped to meet its financial problems.¹⁵⁵ Although aware of the negative results of foreign trade, such as the drainage of specie, the government apparently considered it best to appoint persons to administer maritime trade who both had enough power to try to direct the further development of trade into desired paths and also wished to boost this trade out of their own (clan) interest. This implies that towards the end of the Sung dynasty,

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Chaffee, *Branches of heaven*, esp. pp. 234–42; So Kee-Long (Su Chi-lang or Billy K. L. So), "Financial crisis and local economy: Quanzhou in the thirteenth century," *T'oung-pao* 77 (1991), pp. 119–37; Chaffee, "The impact of the Song imperial clan," pp. 13–46.

¹⁵⁵ Robert M. Hartwell argued in one article that the late Sung rulers adopted an anti-foreign-trade attitude, when they came to realize the extent of the drainage of specie. Consequently, they started to consider maritime trade one of the major reasons for the negative development of their domestic economy. Robert M. Hartwell, "Foreign trade, monetary policy, and Chinese 'mercantilism'," in *Ryū Shiken bakase shōjū kinen Sōshi kenkyū ronshū*, ed. Kinugawa Tsuyoshi (Kyōto, 1989), pp. 453–88. Various statements of high officials would indeed suggest such an anti-foreign-trade attitude. But the actual organization and administration of maritime trade, on many occasions at least, show the opposite.

(private) imperial clan interests had, at least to a certain extent, already been given priority over supra-ordinate state interests. The superintendents of maritime trade still had to guarantee filling the coffers of the superintendencies, and thus of the state. But, serving in a political situation in which this became more and more difficult, they had, above all, to guarantee the survival of the imperial family.

The government's fiscal budget and its relation to maritime trade

The Sung rulers regarded maritime trade as a financial source to pay for their political projects. In this respect, they doubtlessly viewed the remarkable outflow of specie, primarily bronze coins, copper, and silver, with disquiet.¹⁵⁶ Metals constituted an important trade item in contemporary "international" trade. Iron was fundamental for the manufacture of weapons, agricultural tools, and knives. Gold and copper played an important role in Asian religions, most notably in Buddhism, for they were highly valued in the manufacture of religious images and ritual implements. At the same time, the metals had a special importance that derived from the fact that they possessed an intrinsic value and thus a particular exchange value; in other words, they functioned as money.¹⁵⁷ The exchange value had an added importance in trade relations that reached beyond "national" borders. Given the centrality of trade relations within the economy and frequent fiscal shortfalls, the Sung government became increasingly dependent on this abstract form of money. Consequently, the drainage of bronze cash and silver constituted a major problem for the government, since the outflow of these metals represented a loss of real wealth, which should have served the political and military purposes of the state. For the merchants engaged in maritime trade, on the other hand, the export of metals was so profitable – often because of high price differences

¹⁵⁶ For some basic information on money and foreign trade in the Sung period, see Ch'üan, "Sung-tai Kuang-chou te kuo-nei-wai mao-i," pp. 85–158; Richard von Glahn, *Fountain of fortune: Money and monetary policy in China, 1000–1700* (Berkeley, 1996), esp. pp. 41–56; Mori Katsumi, "Sō dōsen no wagakuni ryūnyū no dansho," in *Nissō bōeki no kenkyū*, ed. Mori Katsumi (Tōkyō, 1975), pp. 177–201; J. F. Richards, ed., *Precious metals in the late medieval and early modern worlds* (Durham, NC, 1983); Angela Schottenhammer, "The role of metals and the impact of the introduction of *huizi* paper notes in Quanzhou on the development of maritime trade in the Song period," in *The emporium of the world: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000–1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 2000), pp. 95–176; Robert S. Wicks, *Money, markets, and trade in early Southeast Asia: The development of indigenous monetary systems to A.D. 1400* (Ithaca, NY, 1992). See also the basic studies of Yang Lien-sheng and P'eng Hsin-wei: P'eng Hsin-wei, *Cbung-kuo huo-pi shih* (Shanghai, 1958), which has been translated by Edward H. Kaplan as *A monetary history of China* (Bellingham, 1994); and Yang Lien-sheng, *Money and credit in China: A short history* (Cambridge, MA, 1952).

¹⁵⁷ For a full argument of this point, see Schottenhammer, "The role of metals," pp. 95–176.

between China and other countries – that huge quantities were exported and smuggled out of China.

Bronze coins were the standard currency throughout Sung China, but for larger transactions silver was used. With growing needs for real values the government sometimes even demanded taxes in the form of silver. But the Sung also established separate spheres of iron coinage. From the 1040s on the government attempted to interdict the outflow of bronze coins from Szechwan towards the Hsi hsia (Tanguts) and from North China to the Khitan Liao by creating “iron-currency belts” along the northern and northwestern frontiers of the empire. The idea behind this practice was to confront foreign merchants with a base-metal currency not deemed worth taking across the border. Such circulation of low-quality metal coin had very early on already been applied in coastal regions, too. The ruler of the Min Kingdom in Fu-chien, Wang Hsi (Wang Yen-hsi, d. 944), for example, between 939 and 944 issued *Yung-lung t'ung-pao* iron coins, and lead coins also were circulating under his jurisdiction.¹⁵⁸

In 1045, the fiscal commissioner of Fu-chien, Kao I-chien, submitted a proposal to introduce iron coins into Fu-chien for business transactions with foreigners, while bronze coins were to be reserved for domestic trade only. This proposal gained little support and Kao was subsequently dismissed from office. The reason for the firm rejection of this proposal might be traced back to the following considerations of the government: despite a considerable coin drainage already in the eleventh century and in contrast to the administration of foreign trade with the kingdoms of the steppe, the Sung rulers simply regarded the profits yielded from maritime trade as greater than the negative effect of coin drainage. To oblige foreign merchants coming to China to trade to accept iron coins in their business transactions would certainly have upset many of them, as a result of which maritime trade would have decreased. In addition, such a decision would have given ample incentive for illegal trading activities. Also the fact that, in 1045, the court had not yet begun to think seriously about establishing a Maritime Trade Office in Fu-chien, which would not only tax but also supervise and control all maritime trade activities, implies that, in the mid-eleventh century, Emperor Jen-tsung (r. 1022–63) apparently still considered the consequences of the outflow of bronze cash rather negligible – perhaps in view of the profits some people made. As a consequence, the original regulations prohibiting the use of bronze coins for overseas trade during the early Northern Sung were rescinded in 1074.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Chuang Wei-chi and Chuang Ching-hui, *Hai-shang ssu-ch'ou chih lu te chu-ming kang-k'ou: Ch'üan-chou* (Peking, 1988), p. 18.

¹⁵⁹ So, *Prosperity, region, and institutions*, pp. 98–9.

Table 14. *Government income derived from maritime trade, 960–1180s*
(in strings of bronze cash)

Year	Total government revenue in strings of cash	Revenue from maritime trade in strings of cash
960	16,000,000	300,000
980s		c.500,000
1049–54	39,000,000	c.530,000+
1057–63	36,000,000	
1064–68		c.630,000
1068–78	50,600,000	
1086		540,173
1087–98	48,480,000	5,000,000 in 12 years = c.400,000+ annually
1102–1111	60,000,000	10,000,000 in 9 years = c.1,000,000+ annually
1137		1,000,000
1147		c.2,000,000
1159		c.2,000,000
1162	60,000,000	
1174–89	65,300,000	

Sources: Paul Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung Maritime trade," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 32 No. 2 (1959), p. 24; Hugh R. Clark, "The politics of trade and the establishment of the Quanzhou Trade Superintendency," in *Chung-kuo yü hai-shang ssu-ch'ou chih lu: lien-ho kuochiao k'o wen tsu-chih hai-shang ssu-ch'ou chih lu tsung-bo k'ao-ch'a Quanzhou kuo-chi hsiieh-shu t'ao-lun hui-i lun-uen-chi*, ed. Lien-ho kuo chiao k'o wen tsu-chih hai-shang ssu-ch'ou chih lu tsung-ho k'ao-ch'a Quanzhou hsiieh-shu t'ao-lun hui tsu-chih wei-yüan-hui pien (Fu-chou, 1994), p. 387 (according to the *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao*, the *Sung-shih*, and the *Sung hui-yao*).

A significant increase in the government income obtained from maritime trade can only be detected at the beginning of the twelfth century – a fact that can probably be traced back, at least in part, to the opening of the superintendency of maritime trade at Ch'üan-chou in 1087. From the 980s until the middle of the eleventh century the government received about 500,000 strings of cash annually through the maritime trade offices, which was less than 1 percent of the gross government revenue, which totaled in the tens of millions of strings of cash. During the period from 1102 to 1111 the income derived from maritime trade had risen to an annual average of 1,111,000 strings of cash (c.1.7 percent of the government revenue), and by the mid-twelfth century it had reached a figure of 2 million strings of cash.

Already during Northern Sung times, this meant that, at a time when government expenditure was generally not yet very high, the budget of the Sung government sporadically showed deficits, even though, on the whole, their finances seem to have been rather balanced. In 1085, for example, the deficit reached 1.82 million strings of bronze cash and 60,000 *liang* of

silver.¹⁶⁰ This amount appears to be almost negligible compared to those in modern societies, but recurring indebtedness to finance state projects, which is normal in modern market economies, led to quite different consequences under the economic circumstances prevailing in medieval Sung China. In the long term, the Sung government could not spend more than it collected and possessed. Therefore the government undertook several measures in order to withdraw resources from its society in order to finance its political and military projects: the intrinsic value of bronze coins was decreased by adding a much higher percentage of lead to the copper, lead, and tin alloy of the coins; people were obliged to hand over their copper utensils and silver to official authorities; taxes were required to be paid in silver; and ever-increasing quantities of paper money were issued but seldom redeemed. But rather than bringing about improvements, these measures aggravated the fiscal crisis – at least in those sectors of the economy which were already largely integrated into trade on the basis of a monetary system. The government attracted valuable coins and specie – in other words, it raised credit – from its society, but did not repay its debt. Instead, worthless paper certificates were paid in exchange that were never, or were only seldom, redeemed. The government's paper money thus functioned less and less as a token of value representing coins and specie. Instead of trying to regain its trustworthiness by redeeming the paper certificates with valuable money (coins, specie, bullion), the government kept printing more of them. The sum of paper money in circulation was thus soon much higher than the sum of valuable coins it should represent. As a result, not only was there less specie in circulation, but the prices of the state-issued paper money continuously fell, and its trustworthiness declined to the point where nobody wanted to accept it. It no longer served as a useful measure of value, and thus as an appropriate means of circulation and payment. In this context, the issue of ever-increasing amounts of paper money to pay primarily for the exorbitant costs of maintaining huge standing armies had very negative consequences on trade. Already in 1135–6, mounting military expenses induced the government to issue its own inconvertible paper notes. This initiative was only halted after complaints by both merchants and local officials. When the resumption of war between the Sung and the Jurchen Chin in 1160 caused a new fiscal crisis, the government (the Ministry of Revenue) once again resorted to the issue of paper money, this time *hui-tzu*.¹⁶¹

An entry in the biography of Chang Chien, who served as a superintendent of maritime trade in Fu-chien around 1174–5, mentions that the government

¹⁶⁰ Wong Hon-chiu, "Government expenditures in Northern Sung China (960–1127)" (diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1975), pp. 205, 207, 212.

¹⁶¹ See von Glahn, *Fountain of fortune*, pp. 51–3.

used to issue large quantities of monk certificates, which also circulated as a form of paper money, in order to purchase frankincense (*ju-hsiang*). Chang Chien asked that this practice be abolished, as issuing such great quantities of monk certificates greatly harmed the state's budget.¹⁶² The petition of Chang Chien indicates that monk certificates were also supposed to serve as a capital stock of the superintendencies of maritime trade. In 1125, the government provided the superintendencies of Kuang-nan and Fu-chien each with 500 blank monk certificates and the superintendency in Liang-che with 300, the sale of which would provide capital for the import of foreign commodities.¹⁶³ Paper notes (*hui-tzu*) were also used to pay for the construction of warships, or, as in 1245, to reward the naval and land forces. Originally valued at a short-string rate of 770 coins in the 1160s, their rate had declined to 300 cash by 1210.¹⁶⁴ The consequent reluctance of merchants to accept paper notes only helped to accelerate their depreciation. Within the realm of foreign trade, these politically motivated financial measures had various consequences. Everybody who had an alternative was reluctant to use his valuable cash in business transactions. People began to hoard bronze coins or to melt them down, as the intrinsic value of copper was higher than that of the devalued cash. The issue and circulation of growing quantities of quickly depreciating paper notes deprived merchants of a stable means of payment and measure of value. As a result, they were eager to withdraw cash and precious metals from internal circulation. At the same time, given the foreign demand for bronze cash and valuable metals, ever larger quantities of cash were exported. In this way, the government, through its politically motivated financial measures, only aggravated the problem of the outflow of valuable metals.

When the drainage of copper coins accelerated in the mid-twelfth century, the official policy concerning the metals trade began to change. Numerous prohibitions were introduced to stop the outflow of copper. After 1133, for example, ships leaving Kuang-tung and Fu-chien were inspected to see whether or not they carried coins on board. In 1171, new regulations were issued concerning the export of bronze coins, and in 1199 Korean and Japanese merchants were explicitly forbidden to trade in bronze cash.¹⁶⁵ For the most

¹⁶² *Ching-k'ou ch'i-chiu chuan* (*Shou-shang-ko ts'ung-shu* ed.) 7, p. 15a. When first sold to the public during the Hsi-ning reign period (1068–77), the issue of the monk certificates was small and limited. But as the government sold increasing quantities of these certificates, their value depreciated quickly.

¹⁶³ SHY (1976) *Chib-kuan* 44, p. 11b.

¹⁶⁴ For details, see von Glahn, *Fountain of fortune*, pp. 51–3. The depreciation of the paper notes was the logical consequence of sheer oversupply, the government having issued such quantities that the degree to which these tokens of value were issued no longer stood in a reasonable relation to the real value they should represent, as a consequence of which they lost much of their ability to represent a substitute of valuable coins.

¹⁶⁵ Peng, *Chung-kuo huo-pi shih*, pp. 415–16.

part, these regulations and prohibitions had no great effect, especially because smuggling was often supported by the local authorities. Li Hsin-ch'uan (1166–1243), for example, complained that few people from Kuang-tung and Fu-chien observed the strict prohibitions. A merchant of Ch'üan-chou is said to have loaded more than 100,000 strings of bronze coins into a small boat by night in 1143 and, then put out to sea. Because of the heavy seas the boat capsized, but although the local officials knew about this, they remained silent.¹⁶⁶ An edict of 1182 officially blamed the responsible authorities of Kuang-chou, Ch'üan-chou, Ming-chou, and Hsiu-chou for the leakage of cash abroad. The *Sung history* mentions that even the two maritime trade offices in Kuang-chou and Ch'üan-chou and the two money offices (*ch'üan ssu*) secretly sent ships that carried metal coins out to trade.¹⁶⁷ The revenue officer, Pao Hui (1182–1268), complained that all the money of Fu-chien converged on Ch'üan-chou and then flowed out of China on foreign ships, while the money of Kuang-tung came together at Kuang-chou and was then exported abroad. In addition, he observed that foreign vessels brought cargoes of silver to Kuang-chou and Ch'üan-chou to exchange it for copper coins, offering an extremely favourable price of one *liang* of silver for one string of cash.¹⁶⁸

To many loyal Sung officials, this continual outflow of Chinese money to destinations overseas appeared as an unfair and illegal enrichment of private merchants at the expense of the state that required powerful countermeasures. The Sung scholar Li Kou (1009–59), for example, as early as the eleventh century, expressed his concerns about all the ships that “steal our money and ship it to various barbarian countries in the north and south.”¹⁶⁹ It is, however, misleading to speak of a general and chronic anti-foreign-commerce sentiment in the Sung court and the government. Various higher-ranking officials maintained indeed a hostile attitude towards maritime trade, but there are other signs suggesting that the government still had a more positive attitude. The governmental practices earlier mentioned of having superintendents of maritime trade serve concurrently as prefects (*chih-chou*) and of employing an increasing number of imperial clan members as superintendents of Ch'üan-chou constitute strong evidence that the court still regarded maritime trade as a legitimate source of income, which also implies a positive attitude towards seaborne commerce. The local official Chen Te-hsiu even advocated a decrease in the high taxation rates in order to promote foreign trade. In the year 1212, the taxes levied on overseas vessels in the coastal prefectures were

¹⁶⁶ Li Hsin-ch'uan, *Chien-yen i-lai hsi-nien yao-lu* (Peking, 1956) 150, p. 2422.

¹⁶⁷ SS 180, p. 4396. ¹⁶⁸ Bao Hui, *Pi-chou kao-lieh* (*Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* ed.) 1, pp. 19b and 20a.

¹⁶⁹ Robert Hartwell quotes two passages from Li Kou without providing exact source reference; see Robert M. Hartwell, “Classical Chinese monetary analysis and economic policy in T'ang–Northern Sung China,” *Tōhō Gakkaï* (Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan) 13 (1968), p. 75; also Schottenhammer, *Das songzeitliche Quanzhou*, p. 355.

abolished.¹⁷⁰ In this context, the official limitations and restrictions of maritime trade activities should perhaps rather be understood as a reaction by the government to developments caused by its own monetary policy, meant to prevent further harm to its economy. Thus instead of talking about a general trend from a positive to a negative attitude towards maritime trade, it would probably be more accurate to speak of a shift from an official, more or less centralized organization of maritime trade serving not only court interests but the state as a complete supra-ordinate entity, towards an administration which was, at least, dominated by imperial clan, i.e. court, interests.

EXCHANGE OF COMMODITIES

China was a great maritime power in the sense that her economy produced a vast array of valuable, high-quality manufactured goods that were in demand abroad and were exported via seaborne trade. Fine manufactured commodities, above all ceramics, silks, and metals (especially copper, bronze cash, silver, and iron), were exchanged for a wide range of foreign specialties that were shipped to China. No less than 339 items were listed as imports around the year 1141.¹⁷¹ The most important foreign goods, both by price and by volume, were spices, aromatics, perfumes, and drugs, the so-called *hsiang-yao*.¹⁷² It would be impossible in the space available here to give a detailed description of the enormous range and variety of all the commodities involved in this trade. Instead, this section will offer an overview of the major export and import goods, consider the consequences that the manufacture of an ever-increasing number of commodities specifically for exchange overseas had on local economies in China, and survey the geographic dimensions that maritime trade had already attained by the Sung dynasty. The maritime trade system of the tenth to thirteenth centuries handled a great volume of goods and involved numerous countries and states from Africa and the Middle East across the Indian Ocean to Southeast and East Asia.¹⁷³ In this context, Janet

¹⁷⁰ Entry for the ninth month of 1212, according to a translation of the *Chung-wai li-shih nien-piao*: Christian Cochini and Anna K. Seidel, *Chronique de la dynastie des Sung (960-1279): Extraite et traduite du Chung-wai li-shih nien-piao* (Munich, 1968); Chien Po-tsan et al., ed., *Chung-wai li-shih nien-piao* (Peking, 1961).

¹⁷¹ For a list and an excellent treatise of the commodities traded, see Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," pp. 5-140. Gold, it might be noted, played a comparatively minor role in China's foreign trade during the Sung, but it was nevertheless important.

¹⁷² Lin T'ien-wei, *Sung-tai hsiang-yao mao-i shih-kao* (Hong Kong, 1930). The twelfth-century *Nan-fang hsiang-lu* by Yeh T'ing-kuei (c.1090-after 1152) has unfortunately been lost, but some passages are included in Ch'en Ching, *Ch'en-shih hsiang-p'u* (*Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* ed.).

¹⁷³ For example, a list of countries whose ships frequently called at the Ch'üan-chou superintendency of maritime trade is included in Chao Yen-wei, *Yün-lu man-ch'ao* (1206, *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* ed.) 5, pp. 19b-20a. See also Wang, "The Nan-hai trade." For China's contacts with Africa, cf. Jan Julius L. Duyvendak, *China's discovery of Africa: Lectures given at the University of London on January 22 and 23, 1947*

Abu-Lughod has argued that China was the primary “economic motor” and driving force within the Asian trade system.¹⁷⁴ During the Sung the Chinese exported their own manufactured goods and not simply natural products. On the other hand, they imported mainly natural products, especially *hsiang-yao*, for many of which they paid enormous sums of money.

Maritime trade in T'ang China was largely in the hands of Persian and Arab traders who met with Chinese merchants acting primarily as middlemen between the foreign traders and their Chinese customers. As a rule, the latter were members of the royal family and of the aristocratic and social elites, who normally did not live on the coast. This early trade was mainly an exchange of luxury commodities and local specialties. The principal Chinese port where these commodities were exchanged was Kuang-chou, which functioned more or less as a mere transshipment center. The situation did not diverge radically from the picture of many ancient, flourishing non-Chinese trading cities in Europe and West Asia. The trade did not affect local production, which was oriented towards satisfying local subsistence needs and consumption, and could function completely without any integration of the hinterlands. This situation changed in the course of the Sung dynasty, even though the integration of the hinterlands was concentrated on the commercial transshipment centers and their larger environment. As a rule, the ceramics industry was the first economic sector to become oriented towards production for export.¹⁷⁵ When the taste for a domestic commodity, such as ceramics, became so general as to occasion considerable demand abroad, merchants and any wealthy families engaged in foreign trade endeavored to establish manufactures located closer to the ports of transshipment, in order to save the expense of transportation. But the structure of local commerce and agriculture underwent decisive changes only after rulers and wealthy local people, more or less in alliance with merchants, began to organize parts of local production for the making of goods

(London, 1949); and E. H. L. Schwarz, “The Chinese connection with Africa,” *Journal of the Bengal Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 4 (1938), pp. 175–93.

¹⁷⁴ Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European hegemony*; cf. also John W. Chaffee, “Song China and the multi-state and commercial world of East Asia,” *Crossroads: Studies on the History of Exchange Relations in the East Asian World* 1–2 (2010), p. 36.

¹⁷⁵ A comparative study on how the foreign demand for Chinese ceramics influenced the structure of local ceramics industries is provided by So Kee-Long (Su Chi-lang or Billy K. L. So), “Liang Sung Min-nan Kuang-tung wai-mao-tz' u ch'an-yeh te k'ung-chian mo-shih: I-ke pi-chiao fen-hsi,” in *Chung-kuo hai-yang fa-chan-shih lun-wen-chi*, ed. Chang Yen-hsien (Taipei, 1997), Volume 6, pp. 125–72. The genesis and characteristics of the early maritime trade which developed in Fu-chien are discussed in, among other studies, Clark, “Quanzhou (Fujian) during the Tang–Song interregnum,” pp. 132–49; Hugh R. Clark, *Community, trade, and networks: Southern Fujian province from the third to the thirteenth century* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 1–70; Li, *Cb'üan-chou yü wo-kuo*, esp. pp. 100–6; So, “Developments in southern Fukien under the T'ang and the Min,” pp. 443–51; and Schottenhammer, “Local politico-economic particulars,” pp. 1–41.

for sale overseas. These developments had far-reaching consequences for the structure and organization of local economies. At the same time, the commodities exported also influenced traditions and industries in the countries of their destination. For example, Chinese ceramics led to far-reaching changes in manufacturing and firing technologies and in motifs, shapes, and glazes in Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia, while, before the large-scale export ceramic industry was initiated in China, Chinese ceramics had also been influenced by Islamic specimens.

Ceramics

Due to the availability of local kaolin clays and the appropriate technical skills, during Sung and Yüan times China was virtually the only country able to produce high-quality porcelains, and foreign demand for this marvelous Chinese product increased fast. Sung ceramics have been excavated in almost every country throughout East and Southeast Asia and around the Indian Ocean, and they were shipped further to destinations as far away as the Red Sea and the East African coast.¹⁷⁶ Unlike the trade in precious metals, copper, and iron, the manufacture and export of ceramics received official encouragement, because ceramics were considered a valuable refined commodity the export of which would not result in an outflow of valuable financial resources. During the Sung period, ceramics production "increased largely in response to demand from merchants of southeastern ports, for pottery had become a major trade commodity and was required in considerable quantity and of selected quality for most of the trade engaged in these ports."¹⁷⁷ Not only did the famous workshops and kilns, such as Ching-te-chen and Lung-ch'üan, produce a great variety and large quantities of wares for the domestic market and for customers overseas, but numerous kilns in the coastal regions, especially in Fu-chien and Kuang-tung, manufactured ceramics only for export purposes. According to an entry in the *P'ing-chou k'o-t'an* by Chu Yü, the porcelain exported from China was seldom of the finest quality, its main characteristic being the ability to stand the shocks of transport, the smaller pieces being packed into the larger ones until there was no crevice left.¹⁷⁸ This statement is basically true for ceramics exported to Southeast Asia. But archaeological evidence has shown that by no means was all of the porcelain and pottery exported inferior;

¹⁷⁶ As Paul Wheatley has put it, "there is hardly an excavation throughout the length and breadth of South Asia which has not yielded Chinese pottery of some period or other, and not infrequently Sung wares featured prominently." Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," p. 38.

¹⁷⁷ Mary Tregear, *Sung ceramics* (London, 1982), p. 203.

¹⁷⁸ Chu, *P'ing-chou k'o-t'an* 2, pp. 17-31, esp. p. 18.

occasionally the wares were of very high quality. From the thirteenth century onward the kilns in Te-hua, especially, produced the excellent white glazed Te-hua procelain or *blanc de Chine*. The high-value Dehua white wares were shipped from internal centers, near special kaolin clay sources, to the coast and then exported overseas. The variety of products ranged from various plates, cups, and bowls to jars, vases, bottles and other items. Famous among the manufactures of Fu-chien circuit were, for example, the *kendi* (Chin. *chün-ch'ih*) – Muslim ritual pouring ewers. The *kendi* vessels were specifically produced for export and have been excavated in many places overseas.

During the ninth and tenth centuries – that is, during the initial period of ceramic exports – wares of the Yüeh kilns in northern Chekiang (the forerunner of the green glazed “Northern celadon” from Yao-chou), underglaze decorated wares from the T’ung-kuan kiln at Ch’ang-sha, and the white Ting wares from Ho-pei featured most prominently both in China and in overseas trade. Yüeh wares have been excavated in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and even as far away as al-Fustat (Old Cairo). T’ung-kuan wares have been found in Japan, Korea, and Ko Kho Khao on the Isthmus of Kra; in Nakhon Si Thammarat in modern Thailand; at various places in Malaysia; in Mura Jambi, South Sumatra; in Prambanan, Central Java; in Mantai, Sri Lanka; and in Samarra, Manga, and Shangga in Kenya.¹⁷⁹

From the tenth to the early twelfth centuries, besides some specimens from famous official Sung kilns such as Ching-te-chen (whose heydays came later), the most common ceramics discovered thus far are from Kuang-tung kilns. These have been found overseas in numerous sites, especially in mainland Southeast Asia, such as Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia. One of the more recent (1991) interesting finds was the so-called “Breaker site,” located on the Breaker Shoal, southwest of Palawan in the Philippines. The ceramic cargo, which was dated to the end of the Northern Sung dynasty (late eleventh to early twelfth centuries), comprised a variety of Chinese wares: vases, plates,

¹⁷⁹ Ho Chuimei, ed., *New light on Yue and Longquan wares: Archaeological ceramics found in eastern and southern Asia, A.D. 800–1400* (Hong Kong, 1994); Ho Chuimei, “Ceramics found at excavations at Ko Kho Khao and Laem Pho, southern Thailand,” *Journal of Trade Ceramics Studies* (Fukuoka, Japan) No. 11 (1991), pp. 53–80; John S. Guy, *Oriental trade ceramics in South-East Asia, ninth to sixteenth centuries: With a catalogue of Chinese, Vietnamese and Thai wares in Australian collections* (Singapore, Oxford, and New York, 1986); S. J. Vainker, *Chinese pottery and porcelain: From prehistory to the present* (London, 1995), pp. 67, 81–2; Yoji Aoyagi, “Trade ceramics discovered in Southeast Asia,” in *China and the maritime silk route: UNESCO Quanzhou international seminar on China and the maritime silk roads*, ed. Organization Committee of the Ch’üan-chou International Seminar on China and the Maritime Silk Route (Fu-chou, 1994), Volume 2, pp. 123–36; Yeh Wen-ch’eng and Lin Chung-kan, *Fu-chien t’ao-tz’u* (Fu-chou, 1993), pp. 297–371; Axelle Rougelle, “Medieval trade networks in the western Indian Ocean (8th–14th centuries): Some reflections from the distribution pattern of Chinese imports in the Islamic world,” in *Tradition and archaeology: Early maritime contacts in the Indian ocean*, ed. Himanshu P. Ray and Jean-François Salles (New Delhi, 1996), pp. 159–80.

pots, *kendi*, ewers, bowls, and dishes. The ceramics were quite similar to the types found at other Southeast Asian sites, such as Sarawak, Satingpra, Kedah, Tioman Island (Malaysia) or North Sumatra (Kota Cina).¹⁸⁰ Many of the Sung and Yüan Lung-ch'üan celadons excavated at the historical wharves in Ming-chou were of the same kind as those uncovered from the fourteenth-century Sinan shipwreck, discovered near Mopko, Sinan, in South Korea, which was apparently bound for Japan. The ship was dated to c. 1323 and, besides ceramics, held a huge amount of T'ang and Sung coins.¹⁸¹ The pieces were of high quality, mainly green glazed wares from the Lung-ch'üan kiln and *ch'ing-pai* wares from kilns in Te-hua and Ching-te-chen.¹⁸²

Starting in the thirteenth century, Fu-chien ceramics seem to have taken the major position in the export trade. They have been discovered in many places in East Asia, especially Japan and the Ryūkyūs; Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Cambodia); the Indian Ocean, especially India and Sri Lanka; the Near and Middle East (Sīrāf in the Persian Gulf, some locations in the Red Sea, the cities of al-Fustat (old Cairo) and Damascus; and Africa (Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Somalia, and Kenya). Archaeologists have even discovered Fu-chien ceramics in Australia. Extensive excavations in South Japan and on the Ryūkyū Islands, particularly on the main island of Okinawa, have yielded abundant trade ceramics from Okinawan-style castles (fortified sites) and residential sites.¹⁸³ By

¹⁸⁰ Marie-France Dupoizat, "The ceramic cargo of a Song dynasty junk found in the Philippines and its significance in the China–South East Asia trade," in *South East Asia and China: Art, interaction and commerce*, ed. Rosemary Scott and John Guy (London, 1995), pp. 205–24. A group of "small-mouth bottles," probably jars for the transportation of mercury, which was at that time used for medical purposes, was attributed to the Ch'üan-chou kilns (particularly the kiln at Tseng-chu-shan). Fragments of bowls and some other pieces had been manufactured at Ching-te-chen. About 300 saucers were probably produced at different kilns, such as those of Lung-ch'üan in Chekiang or those of T'ung-an, P'u-t'ien, or An-hsi in Fu-chien. Tz'u-chou types were also excavated from this site.

¹⁸¹ For a description of the Shinan wreck, see Jeremy Green and Kim Zae-geun, "The Shinan and Wando sites, Korea: Further information," *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Explorations* 18 No. 1 (1989), pp. 33–41; Jeremy Green and S. G. Kim, "The Shinan excavation: An interim report on the hull structure," *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Explorations* 12 No. 4 (1983), pp. 293–301.

¹⁸² Carla M. Zainie, "The Sinan shipwreck and early Muromachi art collections," *Oriental Art* 25 No. 1 (1979), p. 109.

¹⁸³ For Chinese ceramics excavated in Okinawa, cf., for example, the studies of Richard Pearson. Richard Pearson, Li Min, and Li Guo, "Port, city, and hinterlands: Archaeological perspectives on Quanzhou and its overseas trade," in *The emporium of the world: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000–1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 2000), pp. 194–201; Kamei Meitoku, "Nansei shotō ni okeru bōeki tōjiki no ryūtsū keiro," *Jūchi Ajiagaku* 11 (1993), pp. 11–45. Originally, Chinese wares were traded via the official facilities in the Korokan, obviously mainly by Chinese merchants. Then they were transshipped both to their final destinations within Japan and to the northern Ryūkyūs. From the mid-eleventh century to the early twelfth, Japan was affected by a shift from official to private trade, as a consequence of which the trading structures experienced a change, too.

the late eleventh century, the Japanese consumers of Chinese commodities were no longer only people of the highest echelons of society. As Richard Pearson has shown, Sung merchants formed a community at Hakata (modern Fukuoka), trading at a large market site which was completely separate from the earlier state facilities at the Korokan (in present-day Fukuoka city). When it was excavated, huge quantities of ceramics came to light, often with traders' names written on the pieces. From Hakata the Chinese ceramics were later also shipped to the Ryūkyūs, apparently by Japanese merchants. During the Sung dynasty, these ceramics were mainly exported through the port of Ch'üan-chou. From there, via direct or indirect channels, Okinawa received ceramics not only made in the Ch'üan-nan region, but also from other areas, such as Ching-te-chen (Chiang-hsi) or Lung-ch'üan (Chekiang). The celadon wares found on the Ryūkyūs were produced primarily in Fu-chien or Chekiang.¹⁸⁴

The major Sung ports for the export of ceramics to East Asian destinations were Ming-chou, Wen-chou, Fu-chou, and Ch'üan-chou. Ch'üan-chou, however, also served as a major outlet for ceramics destined for countries in Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean region, and countries further west. As to the volume of the ceramics trade, although Kuang-chou remained a very important port for shipping from Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean, it was gradually overtaken by Ch'üan-chou. Generally speaking, the ceramics found in the Near and Middle East are of better quality than those excavated in Southeast Asia. An interesting aspect, which has yet to be satisfactorily investigated, is the role of the P'eng-hu island group (now under Taiwanese rule), where Fu-chien ceramics, especially of *ch'ing* and *ch'ing-pai* types, have been excavated.

With the beginning of a trade in ceramics on a regular basis, Chinese technologies and forms also brought about changes in local traditions in countries overseas that had developed their own ceramics industry. For example, the pottery of pre-Angkorian, eighth-century Khmer sites was unglazed, low-fired, and simple earthenware. In the ninth century, glazed, high-fired stonewares quite suddenly appear in excavated sites. Analyzing the characteristics of these ceramics, the influence of Kuang-tung kilns becomes evident. Kuang-tung wares had an even greater impact on Vietnamese potters. Local potters also adopted different aspects of the Chinese forms, motifs, and technology, although always according to the intended function for which the ceramics were supposed to be used. The Khmers, for example, used glazed stonewares as a substitute for metals in decorating the many temples they built

¹⁸⁴ At almost all of the sites, bowls are most abundant, but also the number of dishes and plates is quite remarkable. In addition, archaeologists found incense burners, bottles, wine containers, pouring vessels, small boxes, and Buddhist figures.

in their expanding empire because they had no abundant metal resources at their disposal.¹⁸⁵ The spread of Buddhism and of tea drinking in Japan made Chinese tea bowls, especially the dark glazed Fu-chien (Tammoku) wares, very popular there. Korean and Japanese potters were also very much influenced by Chinese kiln construction and firing technologies.¹⁸⁶

In southeastern China, the development of a specific export ceramics industry reflected a high degree of sectoral integration in the regional economy.¹⁸⁷ Two of the major maritime centers, Kuang-chou and Ch'üan-chou, each developed an export ceramics industry. A comparison of them shows that although their regional development demonstrates similar characteristics, it did not lead in uniform directions. The distribution pattern of kilns in Kuang-nan, for example, was clearly looser in integration¹⁸⁸ and concentrated more along the coast than was the case in Fu-chien.¹⁸⁹ The regional ceramics industry, which began to produce on a large scale in the twelfth century, sought to satisfy the ever-increasing demand in overseas markets. Until 1997, 144 Sung period kilns had been excavated in the Ch'üan-chou region, with Nan-an (36 percent), Te-hua (25 percent), and An-hsi (18 percent) accounting for most of them. Chin-chiang and Te-hua had the largest kiln sites of the time and produced most of the export ceramics.¹⁹⁰ The foreign markets were not only provided with wares in local Fu-chienese styles, such as the famous dark Chienyang ceramics, but also with successful imitations of popular wares from other famous kilns, such as Lung-ch'üan or Ching-te-chen. Because the latter were often in high demand overseas, but were produced in regions further away from the transshipment port, a large-scale local manufacture of imitations was a natural development, as it could significantly decrease the transportation costs before export.

The ceramics of Sung and Yüan kilns may be summarized in five major categories: celadon wares (*ch'ing-tz'u*); amber-like dark-coloured earthenwares (*tse-se-t'ao*); white wares (*pai-tz'u*); shadowy, bluish-greenish-white wares

¹⁸⁵ For a description of Chinese influence in the region cf. Dawn F. Rooney, "Khmer ceramics and Chinese influences," in *South East Asia and China: Art, interaction and commerce*, ed. Rosemary Scott and John Guy (London, 1995), pp. 84–100.

¹⁸⁶ Hsiung Hai-t'ang, *Tung Ya yao-yeh chi-shu fa-chan yü chiao-liu-shih yen-chiu* (Nanking, 1995).

¹⁸⁷ See So, *Prosperity, region and institutions*, p. 197, and his article "Liang Sung Min-nan Kuang-tung wai-mao-tz'u ch'an-yeh," pp. 125–72.

¹⁸⁸ This means that the kilns were scattered at rather far distances from each other; that there was less co-operation between kilns, workshops, and merchants; and, consequently, that there was less co-operation between the local ceramics industry and overseas merchants in general.

¹⁸⁹ The proportion of the local population engaged in the export ceramics industry in Southern Fu-chien, was, with between 0.7 percent in Chin-chiang and up to 9 percent in Te-hua, remarkably high. See So, *Prosperity, region, and institutions*, pp. 197–201, and his article "The trade ceramics industry in southern Fukien during the Sung," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 24 (1994), pp. 1–19.

¹⁹⁰ So, *Prosperity, region, and institutions*, p. 190.

(*ying-ch'ing*); and the dark-glazed Chien-yang ceramics originating from Chien-chou in northwest Fu-chien. Chien-yang wares later came to be known as Temmoku ware in Japan, because originally a Japanese monk, who had come to China to study Buddhism, took some of these dark-glazed tea bowls back to Japan from a monastery in Chekiang located at Tien-mu Mountain.¹⁹¹ The locally produced celadon wares were basically an imitation of the valuable and admired green-glazed Lung-ch'üan wares of Chekiang. In southern Fu-chien these imitations came mainly from Chin-chiang, Nan-an, An-hsi, and P'u-t'ien. A second variety of celadon was of dark, olive-green or yellowish-green colour, mostly bowls with a dotted combing decoration. In Japan this type of ceramic came to be known as *jukō seiji*, allegedly because of a Japanese monk named Jukō who is said to have highly esteemed it.¹⁹²

Earthenwares with dark-coloured glazes were primarily produced at the Tz'u-tso kiln in Chin-chiang. The major kilns for the manufacture of white wares were located in Te-hua. *Ying-ch'ing* wares, finally, were produced by almost all of the Fu-chien kilns, often as imitations of the famous Ching-te-chen ceramics. The great increase in production in Fu-chien is particularly linked to the manufacture of celadon wares which comprised around 90 per cent of the total output and which were made for export.¹⁹³ But, in addition to local wares, ceramics from other production areas continued to be exported through the port of Ch'üan-chou during Sung times, especially Lung-ch'üan, Tz'u-chou (Ho-pei), and Ching-te-chen (Chiang-hsi) wares.

During the course of the Sung dynasty, there was also a shift of production from the coastal plains to the mountainous hinterland. Southern Fu-chien kilns were typically constructed on the slope of a hill with a river nearby that could be used for transportation. Because of their outer design, they are called "dragon kilns" (*lung-yao*). The firing capacity is estimated to have been between 10,000 and 30,000 pieces, each firing requiring about 3,000 to 5,000 kilograms of wood as fuel. In the Kuang-chou prefecture only three counties, all located around Kuang-chou Bay – P'an-yü, Nan-hai, and Hsin-hui – are known to have been involved in trade ceramics production. The kilns closest to these counties which also produced export ceramics were in Nan-en-chou and Ch'ao-chou. They were, without exception, scattered

¹⁹¹ Yeh and Lin, *Fu-chien t'ao-tz'u*, pp. 332–6 (pp. 335–6 provide a list of Temmoku wares in Japanese collections).

¹⁹² Kamei Meitoku, *Fukkekenshō ko yōseki shutsu tōjiki no kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1995), pp. 24–33.

¹⁹³ Cf. So, "The trade ceramics industry in southern Fu-chien." The zenith of the local export ceramics industry was the period from the thirteenth century to the fourteenth; the majority of Min-nan wares from the eleventh century to the fourteenth was of mediocre quality compared to other kilns of Sung China. The key factor of Min-nan's success is therefore often associated with market strategy, salesmanship, and a specific kind of clientele overseas.

along the coast. The Ch'ao-chou kiln complex, around 350 kilometers east of Kuang-chou city, was originally the major manufacturing center for export ceramics in Kuang-nan, reaching its peak in the second half of the eleventh century. Extensive investigations in 1972 revealed at least sixty kilns, which have been dated to the tenth to twelfth centuries by Chinese archaeologists. They produced highly refined *ying-ch'ing* and celadon wares. Ch'ao-chou ceramics from the same period have been found in abundance overseas and are believed to have been a major export item through the port of Kuang-chou. But by the Southern Sung dynasty, this once-flourishing export ceramics industry had vanished and roughly 300 kilometers north of Ch'ao-chou kilns began to spread into the interior mountainous areas, just as had happened in Fu-chien. Consequently, although in contrast to Fu-chien we have no information about large-scale manufacture for export in the mountainous hinterland of Kuang-chou, in both Kuang-nan and Fu-chien circuit we can discern a general shift of ceramic production from the coastal area to the mountainous hinterlands. Yet it is very striking that a once-prosperous export ceramics industry with a great market overseas suddenly experienced a setback during a time when the market for ceramics overseas and, consequently, also the domestic production of export ceramics generally increased. Although the hinterland of Kuang-chou was integrated into a production system particularly aligned for export purposes, Kuang-chou still seems to have served primarily as a port through which commodities from many regions of China were traded.¹⁹⁴

Recent archaeological investigations revealed that probably kilns from Kuang-hsi circuit – an area which is normally never mentioned as having produced anything other than low-quality wares suitable only for local consumption – also produced export wares. Although Kuang-hsi ceramics are, as a rule, not mentioned in Chinese historical records, archaeology has shown that, during the Sung period, kiln sites such as Jung-chou (modern Jung-hsien), Pei-liu, and T'eng-chou (modern T'eng-hsien) not only produced high-quality wares, but also made technological advances well ahead of the more famous kilns at Ching-te-chen. The earliest-dated mold, found at Jung-hsien, bears an inscription dated to 1092; a more recent one could be dated to 1238. The kilns, like those of Fu-chien, also copied wares of more famous kilns (Ching-te-chen, Yao-chou, and Ting-chou). It seems highly probable that Kuang-hsi ware may also have been exported to Southeast Asia during Sung times, either via the port of Kuang-chou or via Ho-p'u, but due to the lack of archaeological evidence overseas, this must, at least for the moment, remain a hypothesis.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ These questions are discussed in So, *Prosperity, region, and institutions*, pp. 186–201.

¹⁹⁵ Ho Chuimei, "The Ch'ao-chou ceramic complex of 8th–12th century China: A regional approach," paper read at the 91st annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, San Francisco,

The situation was different as far as the region of Ming-chou was concerned. Even though Ming-chou was one of the major maritime centers and ports of Sung China, we can hardly find any development of a local ceramics export industry. The Yüeh-yao kilns, which were mainly located on the coast of the Hang-chou Bay close to modern Shao-hsing, flourished during the period of the Wu-yüeh kingdom and the early Sung. Yüeh celadon was of high quality and, although produced primarily for imperial consumption, it was also exported. At its height, the manufacture of Yüeh ceramics spread as far as Ming-chou. Celadons from the Yüeh kilns have been excavated in a stratum beneath a sea transportation quay at Ming-chou. According to historical documents, ceramics were exported from Ming-chou to Korea, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, India, Iran, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Indonesia, Iraq, and Egypt over a period from the late T'ang to the early Sung.¹⁹⁶ But during the eleventh century, the production suddenly declined and thereafter almost disappeared. Southern Sung export ceramics kiln sites, located close to Ming-chou, have been discovered only in Sheng-hsien in Yüeh-chou. Later, in the twelfth century, it was probably mainly ceramics of other areas that were exported through the port of Ming-chou.

Considering the influence that maritime trade had on the structure of local ceramics industries and local commerce in general, the most decisive changes indubitably occurred in Fu-chien. The reasons for that have to be seen in the historical development of the region during the tenth century. Although Kuang-chou continued to serve as the main door to China throughout the period when the empire was divided into five dynasties and ten kingdoms, the local rulers of most coastal regions undertook efforts to promote maritime trade by organizing parts of the local production particularly for the manufacture of commodities to be exchanged overseas. The promotion of maritime trade is especially evident in the case of Min-nan. There, the local rulers facilitated conditions for domestic merchants to conduct trade and attracted foreign merchants, because commodities and profits derived from maritime trade served them as a means to consolidate the political and economic foundation

1992. The major Kuang-hsi kilns producing high-quality wares, Jung-hsien, Pei-liu, and T'eng-hsien, were located in the southeast of Kuang-hsi, along the Pei-liu river, a tributary of the West River, which flows directly to Kuang-chou. Consequently, the kilns would have had easy access to one of the major ports and could well have been exported overseas. But there is also an alternative route from Pei-liu to Yü-lin, from where the ceramics could have been transported down the Nan-liu river to Ho-p'u and the Gulf of Tonkin – one of the major turnover points between China and Southeast Asia since Han times. For an investigation of these Kuang-hsi kilns and for the argument expounded above, cf. Rosemary Scott, "Southern Chinese provincial kilns: Their import and possible influence on South East Asian ceramics," in *South East Asia and China: Art, interaction and commerce*, ed. Rosemary Scott and John Guy (London, 1995), pp. 187–204.

¹⁹⁶ Lin, Du, and Green, "Waterfront excavations at Dongmenkou," p. 308.

of their empire. At the same time, the hinterlands and the harbors north of Fu-chien, such as Ming-chou (Ningpo) or Wen-chou, whose Chinese trade was destined for Japan and Korea, did not play such an important role, partly because the harbors rather served as places of transshipment for domestic and foreign products and merchants.¹⁹⁷ In the case of Hang-chou and the Yüeh-yao kilns, the locally produced celadons were, first, mainly manufactured for imperial consumption and, second, still seem to have occupied a place in maritime trade as tributary items or luxury exports throughout the tenth and early eleventh centuries.

Metals

In spite of the great domestic demands, metals constituted an ever-important export item in Sung maritime trade. They were in demand both for their utility and as mediums of exchange (general equivalents of value), and China was one of the main providers of certain metals in this medieval interregional trade. Most in demand were copper and bronze, primarily in the form of Chinese currency: bronze coins. Nevertheless, silver, iron, lead and gold also played particular roles in maritime trade.

Iron occupied a major position as a Chinese export to areas which did not (yet) have an indigenous iron industry but were important consumers of metals. Although rich iron ores were to be found in many regions throughout East and Southeast Asia, availability of the necessary technological skills, rather than the presence of such ores, was the decisive factor in determining whether a large-scale iron industry was established.¹⁹⁸ The Chinese had early acquired the necessary skills and technology to manufacture cast iron in big, fuel-efficient blast furnaces, enabling them to produce large volumes of iron and iron commodities and to obtain a world advantage in a major trade commodity, at least until the sixteenth century. Iron and steel (*kang-t'ieh*) were fundamental to a state's economy, particularly in the manufacture of

¹⁹⁷ Since the T'ang dynasty at the latest, Ningpo had become the southern terminus of the Grand Canal, and large oceangoing junks from South China or from overseas were forced to transfer their cargoes to smaller boats at Ming-chou (modern Ningpo). The city and port gradually developed into a collecting and turnover center for products both from the Lower Yangtze and from overseas. Cf. Shiba Yoshinobu, "Ningpo and its hinterland," in *The city in late imperial China*, ed. William G. Skinner (Stanford, 1977), pp. 392 ff. Voyages from Ningpo to Korea during the time period from 1015 to 1128 were mostly conducted by merchants from Ch'üan-chou, Kuang-tung and T'ai-chou, and Fu-chou and Chiang-nan; that is, by non-Ningpo merchants (Ibid., p. 396). This may also be taken as evidence for the city's "turnover" and transshipment function.

¹⁹⁸ Besides the fundamental studies of Joseph Needham and Peter Golas, see especially Ian Carvel Glover, Pornchai Suchitta, and John Villiers, eds., *Early metallurgy, trade, and urban centres in Thailand and South-east Asia: 13 Archaeological essays* (Bangkok, 1992); Bennett Bronson, "Patterns in the early Southeast Asian metals trade," in *ibid.*, pp. 63-114.

weapons – knives, swords, and blades – and in casting utensils and tools. Iron was among the most common commodities shipped to both Southeast and East Asia. It was exported to the Jurchen Chin territories in the north, even though the Sung authorities repeatedly tried to prohibit this trade. Many metal vessels, mainly of bronze but including a few iron and silver pieces, were found in the Sinan shipwreck. Items included vases, ewers, cups, plates, incense burners, lamps, and mirrors. Obviously, such metal vessels were in relatively popular demand in fourteenth-century Japan.¹⁹⁹ Java, which is said to have had large iron deposits but no developed iron industry, and the Philippines were also among the customers for Chinese iron, and the same most probably applied to many regions of the contemporary Islamic world, which is known for a lack of its own iron supplies. According to the *Chu-fan-chih*, iron was exported from China to Srīvijaya, Beranang on the Malay peninsula, Java (iron tripods), and Hai-nan.²⁰⁰ Central and Southeast Thailand around the Satingpra area, on the contrary, produced much iron.

Lead and tin are also mentioned as export commodities in Chinese sources.²⁰¹ The *Chu-fan-chih* says that lead and tin were exported to Annam and trade gold, iron censers, needles, and lead to the Philippines, and that lead sinkers for nets as well as tin were exchanged in barter in San-hsü and also shipped to Borneo.²⁰² Lead, which was found in large quantities in Ch'üan-chou's mountainous hinterland, seems to have occupied an important position in the maritime trade of Ch'üan-chou. The information on tin, by contrast, is too incomplete to provide a realistic picture, but it seems that China apparently never became a major exporter of that commodity. Vietnam, the Malay peninsula, South Burma, and the Bangka and Billiton islands all had huge deposits of tin. They lacked, however, the copper required for an alloy to make bronze – the favoured material for Buddha statues and images as well as for vessels used in offerings to the gods and other ritual ceremonies.

Copper and bronze were without doubt among the most important metals in the contemporary international trade. Copper especially was required for religious purposes, but was also important for ornaments, domestic utensils, mirrors, and the like. In addition, copper and precious metals served as household articles for the elite of societies in Asia and the Middle East. Chinese bronzes, mostly imitations of T'ang and earlier bronze figures, were highly

¹⁹⁹ Zainie, "The Sinan shipwreck," pp. 103–14, 109.

²⁰⁰ Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, pp. 5 (mouth of the Indus), 61 (Srīvijaya), 69 (Beranang), 78 (Java), and 177 (Hai-nan).

²⁰¹ Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," p. 116, notes that "China is situated at the northern extremity of the world's most extensive and richest metallogenic tin province," extending from Southwest China to Southeast Asia.

²⁰² Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, pp. 49 (Annam), 156 (Borneo), 160 (Philippines), 162 (San-hsü).

valued among the Muslim elite and were exported to places as far away as al-Fustat (Old Cairo).²⁰³ Eleventh-century Arab and Hebrew records indicate that beside spices, cotton, and porcelain, South Indian or Chinese commodities that reached al-Fustat through South Indian ports included iron and steel, brass and bronze vessels.²⁰⁴ Copper is also listed in the *Chu-fan-chih* as a product of India and said to be shipped by Gujarati merchants to Zanzibar.²⁰⁵ As India and the Cholas could certainly not meet all their requirements from their own resources, iron and steel, brass, copper, and bronze may in all probability, at least partly, also have been imported from China.²⁰⁶

Copper was scarce in all parts of insular and peninsular Southeast Asia except the Philippines and Sumatra. Thus China constituted an ideal source of copper for foreign merchants. In 1172, the king of Srīvijaya asked Ch'üan-chou for authorization to receive copper in order to have 30,000 copper tiles (*wa*) produced to take them back home to decorate Buddhist temples. But after the prefect of Ch'üan-chou, Wang Ta-yu (1120–1200), sent a petition reminding the emperor that the export of copper was prohibited, the copper was eventually not delivered.²⁰⁷ A Srīvijayan merchants' chief (*san-fo-ch'i fan-shou*) then asked again for permission to get copper tiles for the decoration of Buddhist temples. The Sung court finally approved this request. According to the *Ching-k'ou ch'i-chiu chuan*, the emperor later, however, asked for compensation for the copper. Seen against the Buddhist background of societies, the assurance that the copper was to be used for the decoration of Buddhist temples may in some cases also have served as an excuse to obtain permission to export copper even under political circumstances that prohibited its export from China.²⁰⁸

²⁰³ Michel Rogers, "China and Islam: The archaeological evidence in the Mashriq," in *Islam and the trade of Asia: A colloquium*, ed. D. S. Richards (Oxford, 1970), pp. 77–9.

²⁰⁴ André Wink, *Al-Hind*, p. 297.

²⁰⁵ It occurs in India in the Sikkim, Garhwal, and Kulu districts; in northern Rajasthan; and in an eighty-mile belt along the Subarnarekta to the southeast of Jamshedpur. But probably India needed most of its domestic copper resources for own purposes. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, large quantities of copper were also being consumed by the Chola Kingdom (South India, Sri Lanka), mainly for the manufacture of copperplate inscriptions (mostly land donation deeds).

²⁰⁶ See Schottenhammer, *Das songzeitliche Quanzhou*, pp. 352–6; Wink, *Al-Hind*, p. 309 et seq., with particular emphasis on the integration of India in the trade of Islam.

²⁰⁷ Lou Yüe, *Kung-k'uei chi* (Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng ed.) 88, p. 1200.

²⁰⁸ *Ching-k'ou ch'i-chiu chuan* 7, p. 14b; Ma, *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* 332, p. 566; Lou, *Kung-k'uei chi* 88, p. 1200. The above-mentioned chief of the Srīvijayan merchants could have been the chief of those residing in Ch'üan-chou. There were obviously some very rich Srīvijayan merchants living in Ch'üan-chou. See Lin Chih-ch'i, *Cho-chai wen-chi* (Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu ed.) 15, p. 12a. In 1178, the last tribute mission from Srīvijaya to Hang-chou brought tribute items to China estimated to have been worth about 25,000 strings of cash. *SS* 119, p. 2814; for the tribute items, see also SHY (1976) *Fan-I* 7, pp. 55b–56a. These questions, as well as the relation between Srīvijayan merchants and China in general during this time period, are also discussed in Claudine Salmon, "Srīvijaya, la Chine et les marchands chinois (Xe–XIIe s.): Quelques réflexions sur la société de l'empire sumatranais," *Archipel* 66 (2003), pp. 91–112.

Copper was also in demand for its quality as exchange value – as money. In Japan, the production of domestic coins had ceased in the tenth century, but from the middle of the twelfth century a steady growth in the agrarian economy and local commerce stimulated the demand for a general measure of value as a means for exchange. As a consequence, more and more Sung coins entered the country. By the end of the twelfth century, the private melting down of Sung coins to have them recast as local coins had apparently become so popular that a Japanese edict of 1193 officially prohibited private business from using Sung coins.²⁰⁹ Huge quantities of Sung coins have been discovered on the Japanese islands, many of the largest hoards being located in the north, which might suggest export via Korea.²¹⁰ Faced with this situation, in 1199 the Sung government forbade the export of bronze coins to Japan and Korea.²¹¹ The archaeological sites include substantial numbers of T'ang coins, followed by a peak of coins from the Northern Sung, with the maximum in the mid-eleventh century. A very mixed coin assemblage including both iron and bronze coins has also been excavated from the Sinan shipwreck. In all, it carried 8.1 tons of coinage (some 8 million coins).²¹² Sung coins have been found in Southeast Asia, India, Sri Lanka, East Africa (Mogadishu on the Somali coast, Mozambique, and Zanzibar), on the coast of the Persian Gulf, and on the Malabar Coast.²¹³ With the exception of Vietnam, Majapahit Java, and Cambodia, copper coins rarely functioned as a regional tender, although they were generally accepted as an equivalent of value.

Gold was used for jewellery, religious images, and ritual implements, and functioned as a regular tribute item. Silver was exported in the form of refined

²⁰⁹ Kimiya Yasuhiko, *Chung-Jih chiao-t'ung shih*, trans. Ch'en Chieh (Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1935), p. 10.

²¹⁰ The largest one at Sinori in Hokkaidō originally consisted of 450,000 coins. Archaeologists so far have excavated several dozen hoards of over 10,000 coins. In many cases the majority were T'ang and Northern Sung coins, with *K'ai-yüan t'ung-pao* comprising more than 10 percent of the total hoard. The Sakieda Akasaki site in Ishigaki Island yielded thirty-three *K'ai-yüan t'ung-pao* coins, while no ceramics or other metal objects were found. This may indicate that the coins had reached the remote Sakishima Islands before the ceramics trade began. For details cf. Pearson, Li, and Li, "Port, city, and hinterlands," pp. 177–235, esp. 201–3; and Kozo Yamamura and Tetsuo Kamiki, "Silver mines and Sung coins: A monetary history of medieval and modern Japan in international perspective," in *Precious metals in the later medieval and early modern worlds*, ed. J. F. Richards (Durham, NC, 1983), pp. 329–62.

²¹¹ Von Glahn, *Fountain of fortune*, p. 54.

²¹² Green and Kim, "The Shinan and Wando sites, Korea: Further information," pp. 33–41; Zainie, "The Sinan shipwreck," pp. 103–14. In Korea, copper was increasingly used as an equivalent of value, although, for example, on the domestic Korean markets rice and cloth remained as ever the medium of exchange and standard of value and doubtlessly barter was the chief means by which people traded with each other. M. Ichihara, "Coinage of old Korea," *Transactions of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 4 No. 2 (1913), p. 54.

²¹³ Peng, *Chung-kuo huo-pi shih*, pp. 414–15; Wicks, *Money, markets, and trade*.

manufactured goods, such as cups, bowls, ornaments, and other luxury articles. But much more important than its use as a consumer commodity was its role as a general and already "international" equivalent of value. Foreign societies sought bronze, iron, silver, or gold for their use value as military, religious, or social items, such as weapons or ritual or cooking utensils; historical evidence indicates that a significant portion of these metals were also valued as means of exchange.

Recently, a shipwreck of the Southern Han Dynasty (917–71) has been salvaged, the cargo of which contained a large quantity of lead coins and silver ingots from the Southern Han.²¹⁴ A Danish archaeological team found two pieces of Chinese silver ingots as far away as Bahrain in the Middle East.²¹⁵ In this context, also, price differences of gold, silver, and copper throughout Asia and the Indian Ocean were of major importance, and the merchants, of course, used the price differences to calculate and to increase their profits. Price differences not only related to the different costs of production, but also to the fact that merchants of some countries – due to the lack of their own resources and availability – paid extremely high prices to get possession of the required metals. The price of silver relative to gold was low in China compared to Japan and the Muslim world. The high price of gold in terms of cash in China,²¹⁶ on the other hand, attracted imports from foreign countries. Both Japan and Vietnam exported gold to China in return for bronze coins. Traders from Southeast Asia brought both gold and silver to China, but a considerable proportion of the silver brought to China from Southeast Asia was probably later re-exported by Arab merchants to the Indian Ocean region. A sudden rise of the silver prices in China as early as 1015 was blamed on the outflow of silver to both Central and Southeast Asia.²¹⁷

From the historical evidence we may conclude that, as a rule, silver seems to have been preferred as the general measure and equivalent of value in Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, and the Middle East, while bronze coins were preferred in Japan, and increasingly used also in Korea. But independent of the specific local monetary systems, copper and Chinese bronze coins were in demand in almost every country participating in maritime trade with China.

²¹⁴ Denis C. Twitchett and Janice Stargardt, "Chinese silver bullion in a tenth-century Indonesian shipwreck," *Asia Major*, 3rd series 15 No. 1 (2004), pp. 1–50.

²¹⁵ According to the Hong Kong *South China Morning Post*, February 27, 1958. P'eng, *Chung-kuo huo-pi shih*, pp. 414–15, and note 28.

²¹⁶ About 35,000 cash per ounce in Pien-ching (K'ai-feng) in 1127. P'eng, *Chung-kuo huo-pi shih*, pp. 430–1.

²¹⁷ Von Glahn, *Fountain of fortune*, p. 54. As India and the Indian Ocean area were fully integrated into the domain of the gold dīnār and the silver dirhem, the universal gold and silver coinage of the early medieval world, these Muslim coins naturally also affected other countries and areas involved in the Muslim trade system.

Silks and other textiles

From ancient times on, Chinese silk was one of the most famous and valuable manufactured goods sought by foreign merchants and it became the major Chinese export commodity in the early east-west trade.²¹⁸ By mid-Sung times, silk was no longer the major Chinese export commodity, having been displaced by ceramics and metals, a fact that one should remember when using the expression "Maritime Silk Route." Yet scholars generally agree that Chinese textiles, including silk, were among the most important items traded, for example, to Southeast Asia.²¹⁹

When speaking about export silks, one must distinguish between high-quality fabrics and lower-quality silk cloth or pongee (*chüan*), which was also required as tax payment by the Chinese government. In T'ang China, the emperors had originally established a monopoly on the finest silk textiles and set up sumptuary laws to implement clothing codes and protect their monopoly. But the sumptuary laws were violated both by rulers and by merchants, officials, monks, and other "businessmen," and gradually control over luxury silks was loosened. With the development of sericulture and silk industries in large parts of the Islamic world from Central Asia to the Mediterranean, materials for silk weaving not only became more readily available and cheaper outside China, but at the same time popular attitudes towards silk began to change. An increase in production and easier access to silk materials made silk a common commodity, whether expensive or comparatively cheap. High-quality silks, such as brocade, damask, or gauze (*chin*, *ling*) were either exchanged within the official tributary system, or destined for aristocratic and ruling elites abroad. Religious institutions were also among its customers, as the examples of the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox church in Byzantium may show. But even though weavers in the Middle East were already able in Sung times to produce their own silks, which were generally of a high technical standard, top-quality Chinese silks were still exported to countries and cities as far away as the Persian Gulf and the Red

²¹⁸ Silk was not only a valuable and highly demanded consumer article among foreign elite circles, but also served at the same time as a generally accepted equivalent and measure of value in this early trade, because it was also divisible into quantative proportions. These characteristics made it suitable to function as real money in the "international exchange" of commodities.

²¹⁹ For an investigation of technical aspects of the silk industry in general, see Dieter Kuhn, *Textile technology: Spinning and reeling*, Part 9 of *Chemistry and chemical technology*, Volume 5 of *Science and civilisation in China*, ed. Joseph Needham (Cambridge, 1988); for economic aspects, see Shiba Yoshinobu, *Sōdai shōgyōshi kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1968), pp. 271–95; the silk and textile industry in Sung-period Fu-chien is treated in So, *Prosperity, region, and institutions, passim*; Schottenhammer, *Quanzhou im Spannungsfeld zwischen Zentralregierung und maritimem Handel*, pp. 195–223, as well as in numerous Chinese articles published in *Hai-chiao-shih yen-chiu* or *Ssu-ch'ou-shih yen-chiu*.

Sea.²²⁰ The lower-quality and cheaper silk cloths could also be purchased by less wealthy persons and were exported to countries throughout the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia.

Chinese silk reached foreign countries through various channels, either as high-quality luxury items in diplomatic contexts or through private economic transactions. Within the Chinese tribute system, generous presents and rewards were given to envoys of tributary missions. The quality and amount of the gifts also reflected the hierarchical order in which the Chinese viewed their "vassals." Due to an increasing private involvement, the silk industry experienced a steady expansion, especially after the beginning of the Southern Sung. By the twelfth century, weaving and dyeing had become prominent industries in the urban centers of Southeast China – although silk was still produced, woven, and dyed in the rural areas. Already by that time larger-scale manufacture emerged, and factories seem to have produced silk fabrics especially for export. The prerequisites for silk production were, among many other things, soils suitable for the cultivation of mulberry trees, the leaves of which were used to feed the silkworms. The quality of the silk threads depends on the quality of the mulberry leaves on which the silkworms are fed. In this context, it must be mentioned that by the Southern Sung even Fu-chien, a region which was notorious for its bad soils and thus not very suitable for the cultivation of mulberry trees, produced silks. As a rule, however, the silk threads were first bought from the neighbouring area of Chekiang, with Hu-chou providing the top-quality thread. At the same time, wealthy households that possessed the best local soils apparently began to cultivate their own mulberry trees, to rear silkworms, and to specialize in the reeling and weaving of silk – even though the result was not of top quality. By Ming times, Fu-chien had become famous for copying the patterns and quality of silk fabrics from Chekiang in its own workshops. The demand for these silks most probably was not limited to local customers. Rather, this development suggests that local producers tried to comply with foreign demands, possibly from Southeast Asia.

China naturally imported only a little silk. When silk was brought to China, it was mainly as official tribute, a local specialty of a foreign country. Damasks, satins, and brocades were brought from countries in the Middle East and sometimes Southeast Asia. Southeast Asian textiles presented on official occasions to the Sung court came mainly, though not exclusively, from Champa, Java, Siam, Malacca, and Srīvijaya. As early as 839, a complete cargo of silk (*chüan*) was shipped to China from Japan as a gift of the Japanese ruler.

²²⁰ Cf. Liu Hsin-ju, *Silk and religion: An exploration of material life and the thought of people, AD 600–1200* (Delhi, 1996), esp. pp. 189–94.

This kind of material would have been most suitable for use as a ground for court painters. In 966, Champa presented three types of Javanese-made textiles as tribute. In 992, the Javanese brought a kind of fabric to China that, according to Lee Chor Lin, "seems more and more likely to be silk made with ikat technique" (*tša-se ssu-chiao; tša-se chiao-pu; tša-se hsiu-hua hsiao-chin ssu-chiao*).²²¹ Also, Korea sent its own fabrics to China, for example linen, fancy tussahs (bombycine), and even silk brocades. The greatest rival of China in fine fabrics was the Islamic world.

The most common imported textile was cotton, which came mainly from peninsular India. Because cotton was not widely produced in China before the Yüan dynasty, the demand for Indian cotton was extremely high.²²² China was supplied with cotton from India from as early as the first half of the sixth century. Cotton was also shipped to China and Southeast Asia from countries and regions as far away as Asia Minor or the Persian Gulf. Gradually, the trade in textiles became more and more complex and reached a much larger clientele than just members of the elite. Indian cotton was no longer considered a rare commodity sought after only by the ruling elite, but was available in larger quantities, allowing its wider use in society. Nevertheless, it remained relatively expensive, commanding a price equivalent to that of silk, at least up to the fourteenth century.²²³ Within this system of trade it seems that products brought to one country were often later exchanged for other commodities or re-exported. Chao Ju-kua, for example, mentions cotton as an export product of Hai-nan. As we have no further evidence that Hai-nan produced great amounts of cotton during the Sung dynasty, this cotton may first have been shipped to Hai-nan by Arab or Indian merchants and later re-exported.

In general, during the Sung the role of silks and textiles decreased in favor of ceramics and metals. Due to the lack of archaeological evidence, neither the

²²¹ Lee Chor Lin, "Textiles in Sino-South East Asian trade: Song, Yuan and Ming dynasties," in *South East Asia and China: Art, interaction and commerce*, ed. Rosemary Scott and John Guy (London, 1995), pp. 171–86, esp. 178.

²²² The Indian origin of cotton may still be observed in the history of the Chinese terminology for the word "cotton." The term *chi-pei*, or its variation *ku-pei*, are ancient Chinese names for cotton. *Ku-pei* is in all probability derived from the Malay word *kapas*, which is itself a local form for the Sanskrit *karpasa*. Other names for cotton are *po-tieb*, *tan-p'o*, *pan-chih-hua*, or *chia-lo-p'o-chieb*, which, according to Haraprasad Ray, may be a mistaken spelling for *chia-lo-po-lo* (*kapara* = "cloth"), *chieb* being an incorrect reading for *le*, or *kapasi* being a misreading of the Sanskrit *karpasa*. Haraprasad Ray, "The South East Asian connection in Sino-Indian trade," in *South East Asia and China: Art, interaction and commerce*, ed. Rosemary Scott and John Guy (London, 1995), p. 45; John S. Guy, "Tamil merchant guilds and the Quanzhou trade," in *ibid.*, pp. 283–308. A tribute mission with cotton (*chi-pei*) and other items had already been sent by King Gupta to the Chinese Emperor Wu-ti (r. 502–49) of the Liang dynasty (502–57).

²²³ Guy, "Tamil merchant guilds and the Quanzhou trade," p. 289, according to Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa*, 1325–1354, trans. H. A. R. Gibbs (London, 1929).

extent of trade nor the relative balance of imports and exports can be assessed. But in terms of both the quality and production of silk textiles, China certainly was in a leading position.

Hsiang-yao (*incense, aromatics, spices, perfumes, and drugs*)

While China was exporting refined manufactured goods, her most important import commodities were incenses, aromatics, perfumes, spices, and drugs, collectively designated *hsiang-yao* in Chinese. The bulk of these goods consisted of frankincense, camphor, myrrh, gharuwood, sappan wood, sandalwood, lakewood, muskwood, ebony, aloes, asafoetida, so-called "dragon's blood" (*hsieh-chieh*), liquid storax, gardenia flowers, nutmeg, benzoin, patchouli, cloves, pepper, cardamoms, and cubebs.²²⁴ Lin T'ien-wei lists no fewer than fifty-three kinds of *hsiang-yao* mentioned in the Chinese sources.²²⁵ They were mainly, but not exclusively, consumed by the social and ruling elites of China. Cheaper aromatic woods and incenses, as well as some medical products, were also being consumed by regular households, by monks and monasteries, and so on. A contemporary description was provided by Yeh T'ing-kuei, who, in 1152, wrote a detailed treatise on aromatics entitled *Nan-fang hsiang-lu*. Unfortunately, the original of this treatise has been lost, but parts of it have been included in *Mr. Ch'en's handbook of aromatics* composed by Ch'en Ching.²²⁶ The main sources of *hsiang-yao* were Southeast Asia, India, and the Middle East. Southeast Asia and India were the traditional homes of spices and scented woods, and there were few countries or places in these regions that did not send at least one of the mentioned items to China.

The significance of spices and aromatics in trade is also substantiated by archaeological evidence. The cargo of the Ch'üan-chou shipwreck contained a large amount of incense wood made up in bundles of varying lengths, the total weight reaching c.2,400 kilograms. In addition, five Chinese litres of pepper grains, a small quantity of ambergris from Somalia, 6.3 grams of (Arabian?) frankincense, very small quantities of dragon's blood and haematite, and roughly four kilograms of mercury were found. The 2,400 kilos of incense wood alone would have been worth around 50,000 strings of cash, if we assume they were of high quality.²²⁷ Some of the *hsiang-yao* imported to China were later re-exported to Korea and probably Japan, especially via the port of

²²⁴ Lin, *Sung-tai hsiang-yao mao-i*; Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," and Isaac H. Burkitt, *A dictionary of economic products of the Malay peninsula* (Oxford and London, 1935).

²²⁵ Lin, *Sung-tai hsiang-yao mao-i*, pp. 39–70. ²²⁶ Ch'en, *Ch'en-shih hsiang-p'ü*.

²²⁷ Janice Stargardt, "Behind the shadows: Archaeological data on two-way sea-trade between Quanzhou and Satingpra, South Thailand, 10th–14th century," in *The emporium of the world: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000–1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Leiden and Boston, 2000), p. 372.

Ch'üan-chou. Ch'en Wen-sui, for example, a man from Kuang-nan, arrived in Korea in 1022 bringing spices and medicinal goods, including some local products of Ch'üan-chou.²²⁸

Also, Chinese tea was exported in large quantities to Korea, the Khitan Liao, and later the Jurchen Chin. But we have hardly any evidence for tea exports to Southeast Asia. As the local tea was bitter in taste, the Koreans purchased *la-ch'a* (waxed tea, so called because it was packed in small wax boxes) and *lung-feng-ch'a* (dragon-phoenix tea) from the Chinese. The center of the trade in spices and aromatics was doubtless Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean region, whereas tea was apparently primarily exported from China to countries in Northeast Asia. Some of the most important aromatics, fragrant woods, and perfumes are introduced below, to show the reader the significance, characteristics, and the extent of this trade.

Gharuwood, or "sinking aroma" (*ch'en-hsiang*), was the most important aromatic sent to China from Southeast Asia. Gharu is a pathologically diseased, fragrant wood, obtained from trees belonging to the genus *Aquilaria* (*lignum Aquilaria*), primarily *Aquilaria agallocha* and *Aquilaria sinensis*. Both Chou Ch'ü-fei and Chao Ju-kua describe this commodity in detail. According to them, the best and hardest wood came from Cambodia, which was as valuable as that from Champa; the most aromatic gharu, however, was imported from the northern part of the Malay peninsula. But southeast Sumatra, Java, and the eastern archipelago also provided gharuwood, their gharu being known as *fan-ch'en* ("foreign gharuwood"), or, owing to its use as a remedy for curing chills, as *yao-ch'en* ("medicinal gharuwood"). According to various qualities, such as colour, shape, or fragrance, Chinese merchants distinguished several grades and classifications.²²⁹

Frankincense or "milky incense" (*ju-hsiang*) is a gum resin produced by several members of the genus *Boswellia* growing as small trees or bushes in the hills of Hadhramaut and Somaliland. The older Chinese name for frankincense is *hsün-lu-hsiang* (*hun-luk*), which Hirth and Rockhill derive from the Arabic term *kundur*, or possibly the Indian forms *kudu* or *kundura*. It

²²⁸ Hugh R. Clark, "Overseas trade and social change in Quanzhou through the Song," in *The emporium of the world: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000-1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer, p. 72.

²²⁹ *Chien-hsiang*² (flat gharuwood), a product of Hai-nan; *su-hsiang* (quick-dropping gharuwood), in its fresh form a product of Cambodia and Annam, but in its ripe form much more widely distributed, the lowest quality coming from Java; *chan-hsiang* (provisional gharuwood), a ripe kind of *su-hsiang* adulterated with wood; *huang shou-hsiang* (yellow ripe gharuwood), described by Chao Ju-kua as a product of many Southeast Asian countries, the best quality coming from Cambodia; and *sheng-hsiang* (fresh gharuwood), which was obtained from the freshly cut branches of trees growing in Hai-nan, Annam, and Cambodia. Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," pp. 69-72; Burkill, *A dictionary of the economic products of the Malay peninsula*, pp. 197-205.



Map 3. Maritime Asia during the Sung.

originally became known to the Chinese as milky incense, because the more or less round tears or irregular lumps of the resin became covered externally with a white dust from rubbing against each other.²³⁰ Frankincense was collected in the Hadhramaut ports of Murbat, Shihr, and Dhofar, from where it was transhipped to Srīvijaya by Arab merchants. Therefore Srīvijaya disposed of extremely great quantities of frankincense and, at least in the mid-twelfth century, as Yeh T'ing-kuei notes, every year dispatched large vessels laden with frankincense to Kuang-chou and Ch'üan-chou.²³¹ The customs authorities distinguished thirteen grades of frankincense according to the relative strength of its fragrance. According to Chao Ju-kua's *Chu-fan-chih*, the best grade was round and about the size of the end of a finger, and had apparently dropped directly off the trunk of the tree. This is why it was known to the contemporary Chinese also as *chien-hsiang* ("selected incense") or as *ti-ju* ("dripping milk"). Frankincense doubtless figured among the major import commodities and drugs in Sung China. Between 1076 and 1078, no less than 354,449 *chin* of *ju-hsiang* were unloaded at Hang-chou. In 1131 alone, 100,952 *chin* were brought to China, and only a few years later, in 1134, a merchant was rewarded for having imported frankincense to the value of 300,000 strings of cash. In 1135, 91,500 *chin* were shipped from Srīvijaya, being equivalent in value to a total of 1.2 million strings of cash.²³² That the promotion prospects of officials serving in the local superintendencies of maritime trade were determined by the amount of frankincense arriving under their jurisdiction may be seen as another indication of the importance of this product for the Chinese.²³³

Benzoin, or gum Benjamin (*an-hsi-hsiang* or *chin-yen-hsiang*), is a pathological resinous product of trees of the genus *Styrax*, which can be found in the warmer, moister parts of Asia. Benzoin began to be imported into China in the second half of the eighth century from countries in the South Seas, the main producers being Sumatra, Siam, and Malaysia.²³⁴ In 987, benzoin

²³⁰ Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade"; Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, p. 196, note 1.

²³¹ Ch'en, *Ch'en-shih hsiang-p'u* 1, p. 12b.

²³² Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," p. 49, with quotations from Pi Chung-yen, *Chung-shu pei-tui*; SHY (1976) *Chih-kuan* 44, p. 16a-b; SHY (1976) *Fan-i* 7, p. 48a-b, and SS 404, p. 12220. See also SS 186, pp. 4537-8.

²³³ Ch'en, *Ch'en-shih hsiang-p'u* 1, p. 12b.

²³⁴ There existed different names for benzoin throughout Southeast Asia, which may apparently be traced back to a Malayan language. In the *Yu-yang tsa-tsu* by Tuan Ch'eng-shih, 18, p. 7b, it is said that the Malayan name of the *Styrax* tree means "the tree warding off evil influences" and that the resin, when converted into incense, is able to penetrate to the abode of the spirits and dispel evil. See also Burkill, *A dictionary of the economic products of the Malay peninsula*, pp. 2101-7; Wheatley, "Geographical notes

was included in a list of tax-free commodities, and later, in the twelfth century, it was repeatedly included in lists of imports. Yeh T'ing-kuei states that benzoin was brought to China from S'rivijaya. Chao Ju-kua makes a distinction between "sweet benzoin" (according to Chao Ju-kua, also *chin-yen-hsiang*, "gold-coloured incense"), coming in its best and standard quality from Cambodia (Chen-la), and *an-hsi-hsiang*, brought to China by the Arabs via S'rivijaya, which was in quality inferior to the former. According to Chao, *chin-yen-hsiang* has a strong aroma and can be used in combination with all kinds of other perfumes.²³⁵

Ambergris, or "dragon spittle" (*lung-hsien*)²³⁶ is a biliary concretion which forms in the intestines of whales. The greatest supplies were obtained from the sea or the seashores, but it was also sought for and found in the intestines of whales. The full odour, reminiscent of musk, does not develop for at least four or five years. The substance was introduced to the Chinese by Arab merchants towards the end of the T'ang dynasty. In the course of the Five Dynasties and the Sung, increasingly close relations with countries in the Islamic world of the Middle East brought ambergris to China in larger quantities, and in Sung sources it is normally named *lung-hsien*. In 1017, 1156, and 1178 S'rivijaya each time sent a lump of ambergris to China. These imports from S'rivijaya clearly were re-exports of Arab provenance.²³⁷ Chao Ju-kua recorded ambergris as a product of the bazaars of Zanzibar and the Berbera and Somali coast. Chang Shih-nan called it the most costly of all perfumes, one *liang* of the highest quality being worth around 100,000 strings of cash on the markets of Kuang-chou in the early thirteenth century.²³⁸ This meant that

on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," pp. 55–9; and Yamada Kentaro, "A study on the introduction of An-hsi-hsiang in China and that of gum benzoin in Europe," *Kinki daigaku sekai keizai kenkyūjo kenkyū hōkoku* 5 (1954), pp. 7–17.

²³⁵ It was largely employed by those who wore sachets of ambergris and other perfumes of delicate aroma. Hirth and Rockhill, *Chao Ju-kua*, pp. 198, 201.

²³⁶ In 1151, Yeh T'ing-kuei in his *Hsiang-lu* said about the origin of the substance: "When a dragon lies sleeping on a rock in the ocean, he vomits spittle which floats on the water. Flocks of birds hover over the spot and fish gather there to feed on the substance. When they see this happening, the local population enters the sea to gather ambergris." Quoted by Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," p. 128. Many tales and theories were current in the contemporary Arab world about the supposed origin of ambergris, and they were later adopted, advanced, and varied by the Chinese. The dragon, traditionally a symbol of the powerful and mighty as well as the precious and excellent, was a typical Chinese cultural substitution for the sea monsters and *awal* of Arab writers. For more details, see Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," pp. 125–30; Burkill, *A dictionary of the economic products of the Malay peninsula*, pp. 129–30.

²³⁷ Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," pp. 127–8, according to the *SHY*. The first two times, the lump's weight came up to thirty-six *jīn*.

²³⁸ Chang Shih-nan, *Yu-huan chi-wen* (thirteenth century, *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* ed.) 7, p. 5a.

ambergris had approximately the same price as gold. It also became popular to feed lamps with oil scented with ambergris.²³⁹ Interestingly, the substance remained an import item throughout the Sung, although it could have been obtained from Chinese and East Asian waters (China, Japan, and Southeast Asia) as well. The Chinese considered it a product of exclusively Arab origin.²⁴⁰

Dragon's blood is a kind of kino – a dried juice or extract containing high quantities of tannin. In modern times, it is obtainable in most regions of tropical Southeast Asia, especially the Malay peninsula, from palms of the genus *Daemonorops*.²⁴¹ During Sung times, the best grades came from Srīvijaya (Palembang and Jambi), but medium grades were also brought to China from the Malay isthmus. Besides being used for medical purposes (formerly used against dysentery and diarrhea, indigestion, and toothache), the resin and powder were also important as a source of a blackish-red dye for colouring varnishes and were used in the lacquer industry. In China, it was first named “unicorn gutta” (*ch'i-lin-chieh*) and considered to be desiccated blood. In this context, Chao Ju-kua also speaks of “false (or imitation) dragon's blood” (*chia hsiieh-chieh*), this being the juice of the lakewood tree.²⁴² The latter probably refers to Socotra aloe, which is the resin of an entirely different plant (*Dracaena*).²⁴³

Cloves (*ting-hsiang*) were one of the most important commodities in the early Asian trade. The Chinese had been familiar with cloves since about the third century BC through merchants from Nan-yüeh, who had direct contact with the famous “spice islands,” i.e. the Moluccas. During the time of the Later Han dynasty (AD 25–220), this trade was cut off, and the clove eventually reappeared in China through Javanese or Sumatran channels in the seventh century. As a rule, *ting-hsiang* refers to the dried, unopened buds of the clove tree, *Eugenia caryophyllata* (Thunb.) (also *Eugenia aromatica* (Kuntze)). They were used for seasoning, as incense, as a breath-sweetener (particularly during court ceremonies), probably also for dyeing, and for medical purposes. As the *Sung history* and the *Sung hui-yao* indicate, between 977 and 1156 Champa,

²³⁹ Wheatley, “Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade,” pp. 125–30; Burkill, *A dictionary of the economic products of the Malay peninsula*, pp. 129–30; Yamada Kentaro, *A short history of ambergris by the Arabs and Chinese in the Indian Ocean* (Osaka, 1955); Kentaro Yamada, *Tōa kōryōshi kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 1976).

²⁴⁰ This lack of information about the origin of the substance is often considered a striking testimony of the effectiveness of the Arab monopoly of maritime trade.

²⁴¹ Dragon's blood is derived from the fruits of a group of closely allied species and has a resin-alcohol content of up to 56 percent, associated with benzoic and benzolactic acids.

²⁴² Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, pp. 197–8.

²⁴³ Wheatley, “Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade,” pp. 45 (cloves), 109–11 (dragon's blood); Stargardt, “Behind the shadows,” pp. 360–3, 372, and 374.

Srīvijaya, P'u-tuan (perhaps Butuan on north Minandao), and the Chola kingdom all brought cloves to China.²⁴⁴

Pepper, too, was imported by the Chinese in great quantities. Ibn Khurdādhbih says that he had once heard that the quantity of pepper introduced daily for consumption into the city of Kinsay (Hang-chou) during the time of Marco Polo amounted to forty-three loads, each load being equal to 223 pounds. And while one shipload would go to Alexandria or elsewhere in the West, a hundred or more ships would call at Ch'üan-chou.²⁴⁵ The principal sources of black pepper (*hu-chiao*, *Piper nigrum*) imported into China were Java, Sumatra, and the Indian peninsula (Kerala). Although Java is mentioned by Chao Ju-kua as the country from which China acquired most of its pepper, there is good reason to suggest that South Indian merchant guilds, such as the Manigramam, played an important role in the trade in this lucrative cash crop.²⁴⁶

Camphor (*nao-tzu*) or Borneo camphor (*lung-nao-hsiang*) is a kind of resin crystallizing from the wood of the *Dryobalanops aromatica* (Gaertn.), which is indigenous to parts of Sumatra, the Malay peninsula, and Borneo. The camphor imported to China was graded according to its appearance, distinguishing seven grades of quality. The camphor from Sumatra was said to have the most extensive classification. The camphor received a variety of different names according to the parts of the tree from which it had been taken, or according to its quality and the size of its grain. In the thirteenth century, Marco Polo reported that camphor, like silk, was worth its weight in gold; that is, its price was as high as that of gold.²⁴⁷ Camphor was applied in traditional Chinese medicine. Its seeds contain an oil (up to 45 percent) that has a delicate aroma but is a different product from camphor.²⁴⁸

Sappan wood (*su-mu*) was the most important dye exported to China. It is the product of *Ceasalpinia sappan* (Linn.), a small tree found throughout South-east Asia. The heartwood is dark red and is the substance the Chinese used for dyeing to get colours such as woodish-red, purple, sky-green, grape-green, or lotus-brown. The wood first seems to have entered China as a tributary item. In the year 1001, the Sung court received some 10,000 *chin* of sappan

²⁴⁴ Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," pp. 45-7; Burkill, *A dictionary of the economic products of the Malay peninsula*, pp. 961-4; Ptak, "China and the trade in cloves, circa 960-1435," pp. 1-13.

²⁴⁵ Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, pp. 223-4, note 2; Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," pp. 100-1.

²⁴⁶ Pepper grew in the forests of Malabar and Travancore. Guy, "Tamil merchant guilds," pp. 292-5.

²⁴⁷ Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," pp. 101-4.

²⁴⁸ Roderich Ptak, "Camphor in East and Southeast Asian trade, c.1500: A synthesis of Portuguese and Asian sources," in *Vasco da Gama and the linking of Europe and Asia*, ed. Anthony Disney and Emily Booth (New Delhi and New York, 2000), pp. 144-5.

wood from Tan-mei-liu of the Malay peninsula.²⁴⁹ The *Chu-fan-chih* mentions four sources of sappan wood: Chen-la (Cambodia), She-p'o (Java), Lan-wu-li (Lambri, North Sumatra), and Malabar.²⁵⁰ An earlier Chinese form of the name was *su-fang*, which is probably connected with the Malay term *sěpang* or the Siamese *fang*.

Asafoetida (*a-wei*) is a gum resin derived from plants of the family *Umbelliferae*, which are indigenous to arid Southwest Asia. It was common in Iran, Afghanistan, north India, and Tibet, collected during summers, when the resin exuded, and later stored in skin bags. Asafoetida was used in medicine, for example against malaria or dysentery.²⁵¹

Aloe (*lu-hui*) is the expressed juice of a genus of plants belonging to the family of the Liliaceae. According to Chao Ju-kua, it was exported, presumably by the Arabs, from the island of Socotra to Dhofar on the Hadhramaut coast and then shipped to Srīvijaya, which held the monopoly over this commodity.²⁵² In addition, Java and the Somali coast were providers of aloes.

These are only some of the most important examples of a much longer list of *hsiang-yao* imported into Sung China. But they suffice to show the importance of these substances in Sung maritime trade. Other *hsiang-yao* and *yao-wu* are, for example, mentioned in the *Sung hui-yao* as products "permitted to be freely sold on the markets." Among them were a variety of scented woods, spices, and a few minerals.²⁵³ Rhinoceros horn (*hsi-chiao*), ivory (*hsiang-ya*), tortoise-shells, fine iron (*pin-t'ieh*), crocodile skin, corals (*shan-hu*), achat (*ma-nao*), and incenses (*ju-hsiang*, *ch'en-hsiang*) belonged to the commodities monopolized by the government.²⁵⁴

The Chinese frequently paid great sums of cash for these products. They exchanged valuable bronze coinage, silver, ceramics, and silks to satisfy their almost insatiable appetite for aromatics and spices; that is, for goods destined to be consumed. Through this exchange, the Chinese economy in fact became poorer, because valuable manufactured goods, products that possess an added

²⁴⁹ SS 489, p. 14099. Tan-mei-liu may perhaps be Tan-liu-mei (Tambralinga).

²⁵⁰ Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, pp. 53 (Cambodia), 72 (North Sumatra), 78 (Java), 89 (Malabar).

²⁵¹ Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," p. 119.

²⁵² Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, pp. 4 (imported to Aden), 61 (imported to Srīvijaya), 131 (from the island of Chung-li, i.e. the Somali coast), 225 (mode of gathering and description).

²⁵³ The list comprises putchuk (*mu-hsiang*), betel nuts (*pin-lang*), coloured minerals (*shib-chih*), sulphur (*liu-huang*), shells of areca nuts (*ta-fu-p'i*), sandalwood (*t'an-hsiang*), cinnamon (*kuai-p'i*), *Cuminum cyminum* (Linn.) (*shib-lo*), *Fructus cubebae* (*pi-ch'eng-ch'ieh*), *Fructus chebulae* (*bo-tzu*), *Semen psoraleae* (*p'o-ku-chih* or *pu-ku-chih*), several species of cardamom (*tou-k'ou*), borax (*p'eng-sha* or *yüeh-shih*), Lacca (*tzu-k'uang*), *Semen foenugraeci* (*hu-lu-pa*), *Piper longum* (*pi-po* or *pi-pa*), *Fructus zingiberis nigri* (*i-chih-jen*), *Cortex erythrinae* (*bai-t'ung-p'i*), *Anomum villosum* (*suo-sha*), dried galingale (*kao-liang chiang-ts'ao*), myrrh (*mo-yao*), ebony (*wu-men-mu*), lakawood (*chiang-chen-hsiang*), and amber (*bu-po*).

²⁵⁴ SHY (1976) *Chib-kuan* 44, pp. 1b and 2a–b.

or intrinsic value, were to a great extent exchanged for all kinds of aromatics and spices that eventually, due to consumption, disappeared from circulation. In addition, the Sung rulers already calculated their household wealth (i.e. their national wealth) to an ever-increasing extent in the form of valuable money, and not in kind. Money (coins, silver) consequently represented a major item of their countrywide form of wealth (and not staples, such as rice, horses, cowries, etc.). Consequently, the trade balance was also calculated in the form of (valuable) money. When large quantities of China's national wealth were not only used to pay for wars and tribute to their northern neighbours but also to purchase goods (*hsiang-yao*), which were then simply consumed and which thus eventually disappeared from circulation, this money was simply spent away, as a consequence of which China's wealth, as represented in her household balance, decreased. The more money leaked out of the country and the less the country received from abroad, the more imbalanced the trade accounts became, thus the less money there was in domestic circulation and in the state coffers and, consequently, the poorer the state was as a whole.²⁵⁵ This balance only recovered when, on the other hand, enough commodities were sold abroad and valuable money came in again. The fact that the Sung economy was still functioning relatively well despite all the expenses and the outflow of valuable money, and despite the consumption of such great quantities of *hsiang-yao*, can thus provide us with a rough idea of the high level of productivity and wealth of the Sung economy.

At the same time, of course, various groups of Chinese greatly profited from maritime trade, above all commercial classes in the porcelain, shipbuilding, silk, and textile industries, but also even people working in the agrarian sector – and last but not least the imperial court itself, in its role as merchant and investor rather than as state entity. While the development of maritime trade thus had a far-reaching and undoubtedly positive economic and social impact on many regions, cities, and ports, as well as on a great variety of economic subjects, from merchants and businessmen, craftsmen, middlemen, and so on up to individuals who worked in restaurants or for the entertainment of the rich, the state coffers, on the contrary, were confronted with a gradual decline of their national wealth in the form of money. Talking about benefit and loss in

²⁵⁵ A state like China that to some extent calculated its income in the form of money became poorer in terms of valuable money when its imports were not productively used to increase national wealth but simply consumed. The state in fact obtained equivalents in the form of commodities in exchange for the metals paid away to purchase them, but these commodities were subsequently consumed and thus depleted the national wealth. As a consequence, the country's accounts became imbalanced and showed an increasing deficit. The more money leaked out of the country and the less the country received from abroad, the more imbalanced the trade accounts. Then less money was in domestic circulation and in the state coffers and, consequently, the state was poorer as a whole.

Sung maritime trade, we consequently have to distinguish between all the various (domestic and foreign) social groups and geographic regions that profited from maritime trade, on the one hand, and on the other hand the governmental household balance, which showed an ever-increasing deficit in the course of the Southern Sung.²⁵⁶ The real scale of this leakage of bronze coins abroad – both via regular maritime trade and via smuggling – is, of course, impossible to assess, consequently also its relation to the loss caused by tribute payments and wars. But it is obvious that wars, tribute payments, and the particular quality of Sung China's maritime trade were not very conducive to its state coffers.

Trade in other commodities

The most important commodities that do not belong to the category of *hsiang-yao* in the strictest sense were ivory and rhinoceros horn, minerals, valuable woods, precious stones, tortoiseshells, and perhaps the most interesting “commodity” – “black” slaves.

As late as 1050, elephants were apparently still to be found at least in southern Fu-chien, and, although they are mentioned still in 1388 as existing in southern Kuang-tung and Yün-nan, China for long had obtained ivory from overseas. It was procured from a wide range of areas: Africa, India, and Southeast Asia, the ivory from Southeast Asia coming from Indian elephants. According to the Chinese sources *Chu-fan-chih* and the *Ling-wai tai-da*, ivory was exported to China from the Red River delta, Annam, Cambodia, and the east coast of the Malay peninsula; from both northern and eastern Sumatra; and also from Java. African ivory was considered superior to Indian tusk in both colour and weight. Large pieces could weigh from fifty to a hundred catties. The species from Indochina were smaller, and their tusks were tinged slightly red. The important source of supply in Africa was the East African coast in the neighbourhood of Zanzibar and Berbera, i.e. modern Kenya, Tanzania, and Somalia. In the Western Indian Ocean Arab merchants monopolized the collection and transportation of ivory, Murbat in the Hadhramaut apparently serving them as a collection center. From there, the ivory was shipped to its main entrepôts in Southeast Asia, eastern Sumatra (Srivijaya) and the northern part of the Malay peninsula (Jih-lo-t'ing). Tips of tusk imported from Indochina were used for the manufacture of scent-holders

²⁵⁶ So Kee-Long, for example, in his volume on South Fu-chien's maritime trade repeatedly highlights economic sectors and commercial groups that profited from maritime trade. See So, *Prosperity, region, and institutions*, *passim*.

(*bsiang-tieh*) and came apparently from tame elephants, large numbers of which were kept at the Cambodian court.²⁵⁷ Rhinoceros horn was imported from the Red River delta, Annam, and the northern part of the Malay peninsula, Java, India, and the Zanzibar coast of Africa.

Minerals were less in demand than aromatics. An exception was perhaps sulphur, which was sought in greater quantities. Sulphur was produced in Java (Indonesia) and Japan, but Tufan (the Tibetan region) is also mentioned.²⁵⁸ Sulphur was above all used for medical and military purposes; sometimes it is mentioned in relation to Taoist practices. For centuries it had been imported from Indonesia, where it was primarily gathered in volcanic regions. During the Sung, Japan already seems to have been the main provider. For example, in 1084 the court ordered the prefect of Ming-chou to purchase 500,000 catties of sulphur from Japan, a task which was to be fulfilled by ten teams of merchants.²⁵⁹

Some other mineral varieties from abroad, like alum (*fan*), were obviously regarded as more pure or more active than their Chinese equivalents and were therefore imported, mainly by Arab merchants. Already during T'ang times, alum had been graded according to its colour. "White alum" was the purest. Some white alum was produced in northern China, but the best-quality came either from Qoço in Central Asia or also from Iran and Byzantium, the Iranian alum being apparently much favored by druggists.²⁶⁰ According to the section on minerals in the *Pen-ts'ao kang-mu* (*fan-shih*), white alum came originally from West Asia – that is, Iran – or from the eastern parts of the former Roman Empire (*Ta Ch'in*).²⁶¹ The white kind of alum, *po-szu pai-fan*, is even described as *hai-yao*, which may be interpreted as the "medicine from overseas."

²⁵⁷ Cf. Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," pp. 111–12; Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, pp. 48 (from Annam), 53 (Cambodia), 61, 67–9 (Malay Peninsula), 71 (East Sumatra), 72 (Sri Lanka), 77 (Java), 96 and 100 (Coromandel Coast), 116 (from the Arabs), 128 (Berbera Coast), 149 (Islands of Pemba and Madagascar?); Chou, *Ling-wai tai-ta*, according to Netolitzki, *Das Ling-wai tai-ta*, pp. 158–60.

²⁵⁸ SS 489, p. 14091 (Java); 492, p. 14158 (Tufan); 491, p. 14136 (Japan); Ma, *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao* 332, p. 2606. Japan was China's main provider of sulphur in later centuries; for example, during the Ming dynasty, the Ryūkyū kingdom regularly sent sulphur to China as tribute; sulphur featured among the most important tribute items of the country.

²⁵⁹ Chau Ju-kua mentions sulphur as a product of Java (p. 78). For Japan as the main provider of sulphur, see Li P'ei-hao et al., "Sung-tai Chung jih ching-chi wen-hua chiao-liu," *Pei-ching ta-hsüeh hsüeh-pao* 5 (1985), pp. 2–8 and 34.

²⁶⁰ Schafer, *The golden peaches of Samarkand*, p. 217, quotes Li Lin-fu et al., *T'ang liu-tien* 20, pp. 18a–19a, and Li Shih-chen, *Pen-ts'ao kang-mu* (Peking, 1990) 11, p. 11b.

²⁶¹ Li, *Pen-ts'ao kang-mu* 11, pp. 669–70, says: "The 'white alum' that comes from Persia and Da Qin is white in colour and it is bright and pure." See also Sung Hsien, *Ku-tai Po-szu i-hsüeh yü Chung-kuo* (Peking, 2001).

Tortoiseshells (*tai-mao*) came from several parts of Southeast Asia (Borneo, the Philippines, Java, as well as smaller islands of the eastern archipelago), from India, and from the Berbera and Somali coasts.²⁶² Also pearls (*chen-chu*) were still imported from overseas, although China had its own pearl fisheries in the shallow seas at Ho-p'u, west of the Lei-chou peninsula in the southern part of Kuang-nan-hsi circuit and on the northern coast of Hai-nan Island.²⁶³ But these fisheries were banned to Chinese divers during most of the Sung period. Pearls were known as a product of the seas bordering the Arab countries and the Middle East, particularly the Persian Gulf, and of the coasts of Malabar, Coromandel, and Ceylon in the Indian Ocean. In Southeast Asia, they were also obtained from parts of Malaysia, the coasts of Kampar in Sumatra, Java, and the Philippines. The major collecting center for pearls in Southeast Asia was, once again, Srīvijaya.²⁶⁴

It is certainly not surprising that slaves (*nu-pi*) have to be mentioned, too. Slaves constituted a major "trade commodity" in the ancient and medieval maritime world, even though in Chinese sources they are only mentioned in connection with a few countries. According to the *Ling-wai tai-ta*, male and female slaves were bought and shipped in Annamese vessels. It also states that the inhabitants of an unidentified country in the South Seas (Nan-hai) called Sha-hua-kung, who were addicted to piracy, used to sell their captives in Java. Chao Ju-kua notes that an adult male slave was priced at three *liang* of gold or its equivalent in scented wood. It is possible that also black Africans were traded and brought to China, although the term "black slaves" in most cases probably referred to Southeast Asian slaves. We know that thousands of black slaves were sold to Arab countries, where they fetched high prices. Some of them might later have reached China on Arab ships.²⁶⁵ Chu Yü speaks of savages with lacquer-black bodies and curly hair, who are first enticed by offers of food and then captured. He further explains that in Kuang-chou most of the wealthy households kept so-called "devil slaves" (*kuei-nu*), who were very strong and could lift several hundred catties. Their nature is described as simple, so that they are also called "wild men" (*yeh-jen*), their colour being as black as Chinese ink, their lips red, and their hair curly and yellow. There were both males and females among them, and they supposedly lived on the

²⁶² For a discussion of the trade in tortoiseshells, see Roderich Ptak, "China and the trade in tortoise shells (Sung to Ming)," in *Emporia, commodities and entrepreneurs in Asian maritime trade, c. 1400–1750*, ed. Roderich Ptak and Dietmar Rothermund (Stuttgart, 1991), pp. 195–229.

²⁶³ Basic information on the pearl fisheries at Ho-p'u can be obtained from Edward Schafer, "The pearl fisheries of Ho-p'u," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 72 No. 4 (October–December 1952), pp. 155–68; Schafer, *The golden peaches of Samarkand*, pp. 243–4.

²⁶⁴ Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade," pp. 89–90.

²⁶⁵ Netolitzki, *Das Ling-wai tai-ta*, pp. 37, 48; Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, pp. 48, 84.

islands beyond the seas. Chu also speaks of a kind of wild men living close to the sea who can enter the water without closing their eyes. They were called "K'un-lun slaves." These slaves were also used on board Chinese ships to repair and caulk leaks, because they not only were able to keep their eyes open under water, but were at the same time excellent swimmers.²⁶⁶ Some African black slaves were definitely shipped to China by the Arabs, but it is difficult to provide any figures about the extent of this trade. The blacks in China seem to have been rather an unusual "luxury product."²⁶⁷

The trade in books is more difficult to comprehend. It is likely that there was much illegal trade in books that is not reflected in official records. The circulation of books became widespread thanks to the development of woodblock printing during the Sung dynasty. Chinese books were, of course, only of great interest to those who could read them and these were, above all, the Koreans and the Japanese. The export of many titles was, however, prohibited by the Chinese government. Very soon, for example, the export of the *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* by Li Fang (925–96) was forbidden. Historical works were considered manuals of diplomacy and of the art of war. It was, therefore, thought dangerous to have them fall into the hands of enemies. The Chinese were also convinced that a correct interpretation of history required a particular moral attitude, which the barbarians did not have.²⁶⁸

According to Chao Ju-kua, books printed in Fu-chien were exported to Korea.²⁶⁹ Hsiung Ho (1253–1312) also mentions the export of books from Fu-chien to Korea and Japan.²⁷⁰ Monks demanded Buddhist scriptures, which were shipped to Japan and Korea after being brought to China during T'ang times and printed and distributed within China. Members of the Japanese aristocracy considered it a must to possess Chinese literature in their libraries. The library of Fujiwara no Yorinaga (1120–56), a member of the Fujiwara ruling class, is, for example, said to have held more than 1,000 books from China, among them some seventy classical texts.²⁷¹ Merchants were ordered to purchase the books in China. The situation was similar in Korea. After

²⁶⁶ Chou, *P'ing-chou k'o-i'an* 2, p. 20.

²⁶⁷ See the recent study on black Africans in China by Don Wyatt, *The blacks of premodern China* (Philadelphia, 2010).

²⁶⁸ On the export prohibition of Chinese historical writings to her neighbours, cf. Erhard Rosner, "Zum Verbot der Weitergabe chinesischer Geschichtswerke an die Barbaren," in *Studia Sino-Mongolica: Festschrift für Herbert Franke*, ed. Wolfgang Bauer (Wiesbaden, 1979), p. 96.

²⁶⁹ Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, p. 168.

²⁷⁰ Hsieh Shui-shun and Li T'ing, *Fu-chien ku-tai k'o-shu* (Fu-chou, 1997), p. 65.

²⁷¹ Ivo Smits, *The pursuit of loneliness: Chinese and Japanese nature poetry in medieval Japan, ca. 1050–1150* (Wiesbaden, 1995), p. 80; for books and copies of Chinese works in Japan, see also Wang Chen-p'ing, "Manuscript copies of Chinese books in ancient Japan," *Gest Library Journal* 4 No. 2 (Winter 1991), pp. 35–67.

Wang Kǒn (877–943, r. 918–43) came to rule Koryŏ (918–1392) (as T'aе-jo) and promoted Chinese culture to a greater extent than this had been done before, Chinese books were circulated more widely in Korea. Woodblock prints were either procured by outright purchase or as gifts, or they were smuggled. Merchants from Fu-chien were especially blamed for illicitly selling books abroad.²⁷² For example, Hsü Chien received both money and gratuities from sources in Koryŏ, whereupon he commissioned printers in Hang-chou to engrave the *Flower garland sutra* (*Hua-yen-ching*). Furthermore, he had woodblocks carved of the Classics, yielding a weight of more than 2,000 *chin*, and shipped them to Korea, receiving a reward of more than 3,000 *liang* of silver.²⁷³

The sale of books apparently became so attractive that Su Shih (1037–1101) submitted a petition to the emperor to have the export of books to foreign countries banned. He particularly intended to stop the outflow of books to the Khitan Liao via Koryŏ.²⁷⁴ Espionage and the betrayal of state secrets played an important role with respect to exporting books. Chinese books and texts were also sold to countries in Southeast Asia, the Indian archipelago, and the Islamic world, but the center of this trade lay in East Asia. Furthermore, despite excellent native resources of paper – paper in China was made from hemp, kudzu, paper mulberry, even from bamboo and rosewood, the most exquisite books being written on silk – some paper nonetheless had been imported from abroad since T'ang times. Koryŏ, for example, sent paper scrolls as tribute – Korea being renowned for its excellent-quality paper. The T'ang emperor Hsüan-tsung (r. 712–56) used Japanese paper. The Japanese made paper of pine bark. Even countries in Southeast Asia had their own white paper.

The local maritime trade office (*shih-po ssu*) of Fu-chien also had books printed that were paid for from its own financial reserves. In 1209, for example, the *Collected Works of Mr Liang-hsi* (*Liang-hsi chi*) by Li Kang were printed in 180 chapters plus a six-chapter appendix. That year, Li Ta-yu (1159–1224), a grandson of Li Kang, was employed as an administrative assistant in the local maritime trade office. Fourteen of an original twenty-five chapters of a *shih-po ssu* printing of Su Shih's writings are still preserved.²⁷⁵ The sale of

²⁷² In Fu-chien, for example, a flourishing printing business emerged. Lucille Chia, *Printing for profit: The commercial publishers of Jianyang, Fujian (11th–17th centuries)* (Cambridge, MA, 2002).

²⁷³ Sung Shee, "The trade and culture relations between China and Koryo during the Northern Sung," *Chinese Culture* 36 No. 2 (1995), esp. p. 71, quoting the *Tung-p'o tsou-i* 6, by Su Shih; see also Sung Shee, "The contributions of Chinese merchants to the trade relations between Sung China and Koryo," *Chinese Culture* 18 No. 4 (1977), pp. 1–18.

²⁷⁴ Sung, "The trade and culture relations between China and Koryo," pp. 65–74.

²⁷⁵ Hsieh and Li, *Fu-chien ku-tai k'o-shu*, pp. 150–2.

books printed under their own supervision was, thus, another way to fill the coffers of the maritime trade offices and, consequently, a means to increase the government's revenue – although, here too, private enrichment and corruption played their part.

CONCLUSION

During the Sung dynasty, China certainly was one of the major and economically most powerful empires in the world. At the same time it was a leading maritime power in terms of international relations, commodity exchange, and technological progress, for example in the fields of naval and shipbuilding technology and in the production of highly manufactured goods, such as ceramics, which were internationally traded via maritime routes. Politically, China was in fact no longer the unchallenged middle kingdom surrounded by "barbarian peoples," as had been the case during earlier periods. But economically and technologically it led the rest of the world and produced a great variety of commodities and things which were in high demand in foreign countries. Its economy and commodities attracted merchants from all over the known world, and, on the other hand, its own demand for foreign products seemed to be almost insatiable. China's position as a maritime power was consequently primarily economic. In contrast to the Ming emperor Yung-lo (r. 1402–24), who at the beginning of the fifteenth century launched the great maritime expeditions led by the eunuch Cheng Ho (1371–c.1433), or even the Yüan emperor Khubilai (1215–94, r. 1260–94), who invaded Japan (1281), Champa and Tongkin (1283 to 1288) with naval forces and sent a thousand-ship military expedition to Java (1293), Sung China's foreign political naval activities remained modest. But the Sung dynasty marked a first and significant peak in the long period of expanding maritime relations from the tenth to fifteenth centuries. The evidence for this is not only provided by written sources, but is increasingly substantiated and underpinned by archaeological discoveries.

China's demand for foreign exotic goods and luxury articles had been large ever since the early T'ang dynasty. But the trade between East and West at that time still mainly passed through the overland (silk) routes via Central Asia. Gradually, however, after about the ninth to tenth centuries, maritime trade routes became far more important. The reasons for this development have partly to be sought in the historical development and political context of greater Asia. At the same time, it is incontestable that the decisions of Chinese rulers and emperors contributed decisively to the rapid expansion of seaborne commerce and maritime trade relations. Already during the Five Dynasties period, when China was divided into several independent kingdoms, local

rulers actively promoted maritime trade. Subsequently, the decision of the Sung government to participate in maritime trade, and to use it as a source of income to finance its political and military goals, further boosted China's position as a maritime power. In contrast to the T'ang rulers, the Sung government actively engaged in and promoted seaborne commerce, and used it as a source of income.

Considering the particular characteristics of this trade, it is evident that the Chinese exported their own manufactured goods – commodities incorporating an intrinsic value, such as ceramics or bronze cash – and exchanged these primarily for natural products, especially for aromatics, perfumes, scented woods (*bsiang-yao*), and a few other luxury items, such as ivory, for many of which they paid enormous sums of money. This particular foreign trade thus gradually led to drainage of valuables abroad. At the same time, given the high demand abroad for copper and bronze, the Sung additionally suffered heavily from an outflow of bronze coins, their major equivalent of value and means of circulations. Bronze cash was, consequently, not only used as a means to pay for all the desired foreign commodities, but became itself an object of trade. The drainage of copper and bronze cash eventually exacerbated the critical financial situation of the Sung government. For many government officials, this led to an increasingly negative attitude towards maritime trade and commerce. The Sung ruling class and the government in general did not, however, simply adopt an “anti-foreign-trade” attitude. Instead, they still considered maritime trade a financial source to be tapped. This becomes evident when looking at political-economic measures of the later Sung government, such as the abolition of taxes on overseas vessels in 1212, and at the superintendents appointed for the administration of maritime trade, as well as their particular official functions and positions. In Ch'üan-chou, which, since 1129, also accommodated the Southern Outer Office of Clan Affairs (*Nan-wai tsung-cheng ssu*), the superintendents were provided with even more power and authority than before, and, in addition, many of them were members of the imperial clan. The specific development within the administration of maritime trade towards the end of the Sung dynasty may show that in a situation of national emergency, (private) imperial clan interests were, at least to a certain extent, given priority over the interest of consolidating the state as the supreme political entity. This implies that in a politically difficult situation, the imperial family tried, above all, to guarantee its own survival. Such measures, however, did not solve the political and economic problems of the country, but simply stabilized or guaranteed the economic foundation of the imperial clan for another couple of years. In 1279, the Sung empire was conquered – interestingly the decisive battle was a naval one – by the Mongols, who established

their own dynasty on Chinese territory. Along with the Chinese empire, the Mongols inherited a wide network of maritime trade relations, including the necessary naval and shipbuilding technology. Under Mongol rule, China's prestige as a maritime power eventually reached a second peak;²⁷⁶ at the same time it was a transition period from the relatively free trade under the Southern Sung to the regulated tributary trade of the early Ming.

²⁷⁶ For China's naval and commercial maritime activities, see Lo Jung-pang, *China as a sea power*, pp. 211–319.

CHAPTER 8

SUNG SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Robert Hymes

INTRODUCTION

In the language of modern historiography on premodern China, “social change” and “Sung dynasty” have been constant companions. The topic is vast. A number of arenas of social change are the topics of other chapters, including those on economy, education and examinations, and law. The present chapter thus makes no claim to comprehensiveness. It will examine several important areas of striking change in the Sung and offer a general framework to help in understanding them, identifying three intertwined processes that pervasively underlie otherwise distinct phenomena of Sung social change. The three are the rise of the commercial economy and money; a shift in the role of the state across the dynasty, tending to diffuse former state powers and projects to private actors, to the market, and to “society” at large; and the spread of printing, making texts more available and literacy more attainable.

The chapter’s structure needs explanation. Shorter introductory sections treat the first two underlying processes, commerce and state change, and the main body comprises three longer topical sections, on gender, religion, and the nature of elites, in which these common processes can be seen. A bridge between introduction and topical exposition is the third introductory section, on printing: like the three final sections it offers a detailed account of a single topic, in which we can already see the interactions of the underlying processes of commerce and state change that the first sections propose; but it introduces the third process – the expansion of literacy through printing – that will appear in the other sections. The argument is not mechanical: the three processes do not operate in the same proportions in each sphere; but, as will become clear, influences of all three are manifest again and again in Sung society.

Commerce and money

The evening was clear, and I opened the south window and watched the creek and mountains. There were a great many fish in the creek. Sometimes they leapt up, breaking the

surface of the water. As the slanting rays of the (setting) sun reflected off them, they were like silver daggers. Wherever one looked there were people fishing with lines or pulling in nets. For this reason, fish was very cheap.¹

This is the poet Lu Yu (1125–1209), in an 1170 diary of a journey up the Yangtze to Szechwan. The work is a sort of high-class travelogue, with dual focus on natural or architectural beauty and on the historical meaning of sites along the way. The passage on the fish begins as atmospheric appreciation of a beautiful evening, but veers abruptly into the arena of supply and demand. Without believing that an age has a character, one may still find the sudden shift of topic, and the whole passage, characteristic of the Sung. I do not think one would often find its like in earlier periods.

The chapter on economy shows the rise of money and commerce in all their complexity. The purpose of this section will be to show that commerce and money shaped arenas and activities that we do not think of as economic; that they shaped the ties people formed to each other and the ways they saw themselves, each other, and their lives. We may see the pervasiveness of the impact by looking where one would not usually expect to find commercial and monetary thinking. The examples may seem to stray from social into cultural change, but the distinction is artificial: money and commerce are cultural categories, and so are social roles, relationships, and ways of life.

The Lu Yu passage may remind one of the turn toward the everyday, the readiness to take on any topic, that some have found in Sung poets.² One might build an argument on European models: that experience of the market disenchanted the world for Sung people, and for Sung poets as compared to those of T'ang. But one need not draw one's connections so indirectly. Yoji Asami has shown that Sung poets used metaphors explicitly drawn from the market to explain poetic composition, especially the processes of borrowing and creating material. Su Shih and Huang T'ing-chien compared a poet to a merchant who needed money to buy his goods. For Su the poet's "money" was the new meaning (*i*) that he gave to borrowed language. In effect, when the poet appropriates past poets' words, he compensates the taking with the new meaning he puts back into the system. How does one pay others for taking their goods? With one's own money. How does one pay for taking their words? With one's own meaning. Su's view was much cited in Southern Sung. For Huang T'ing-chien the "money" a poet accumulated was the broad reading

¹ Lu Yu, *Ju Shu chi*, 7th month, 14th day, in *Wei-nan wen-chi* (Ssu-pu pei-yao ed.) 44, p. 15a. My translation only slightly changes that of Chang Chun-shu and Joan Smythe in *South China in the twelfth century: A translation of Lu Yu's travel diaries July 3–December 6, 1170* (Hong Kong, 1981), p. 79.

² See, for example, Kojiro Yoshikawa, *An introduction to Sung poetry*, trans. Burton Watson (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 14–19; and Jonathan Chaves, *Mei Yao-ch'en and the development of early Sung poetry* (New York, 1976), pp. 134–46 and 191–9.

that prepared him to compose. The idea is something like Su's, but slightly different. Tai Fu-ku (1167–?), a poet of the Chiang-hu school, likened his own lack of education and reading to a merchant's lack of capital (*tzu-pen*) to invest in merchandise, and poets of the Chiang-hsi school often wrote of their need for "poetic capital" (*shih-pen*).³ Sung poets could imagine themselves engaged in relationships somehow like a merchant's relations to his goods and his suppliers.

Thus poets; consider painters. Heping Liu's work shows that a true commercial market for paintings first grew up in the Northern Sung, with merchants prominent as buyers, sellers, and patrons. The arresting image of official painters of the prestigious state Painting Academy using time between assignments to hawk their paintings on the street outside the Academy is just one striking phenomenon that emerges from Liu's work. Of course, an open market was only one channel through which painters worked: alongside it were forms of long-term patronage, private or imperial – though even the emperor paid his Academy painters at defined piece rates for their assigned products, rather than treating these as automatic functions of their job. But just as relevantly for the issues at hand, Liu shows that merchants, shops, cargo ships, mills, and other artifacts of commerce became common subjects of painting in this period; and he offers a persuasive new reading of the famous scroll painting *Ch'ing-ming shang-ho t'u* (*Going up the river during the spring festival*) as a portrait of a "seasonal journey of commerce."⁴ The market, that is, became both occupational mode and subject matter for painters. Liu's work suggests that the amateur ideal in literati painting, whose beginnings Robert Harrist, Martin Powers, and others have shown to lie already in Northern Sung, is not only a status-asserting reaction against professional painters and a declaration of independence from courtly tastes, but a stand against the dominant tastes of the market as well.⁵ The disdain for mere likeness that literati painters constantly avowed over the succeeding centuries makes sense against this background, for Liu also argues that skill in imitation of the world was precisely the ideal of the Northern Sung art marketplace.

As subject matter, commerce and money crept into other corners of Sung culture. Shiba Yoshinobu discovered a source on the organization

³ Yoji Asami, "'Self' and 'others' in Sung theory of poetics: The concept of 'currency,' 'merchandise,' and 'asset' in the Chiang-hsi school of poetry," paper presented at the 54th Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Washington, DC, April 2002.

⁴ Liu Heping, "Painting and commerce in Northern Sung dynasty China, 960–1126" (diss., Yale University, 1997).

⁵ Robert Harrist, *Painting and private life in eleventh-century China: Mountain Villa by Li Gonglin* (Princeton, 1998); Martin Powers, "Discourses of representation in tenth- and eleventh-century China," in *The art of interpreting*, ed. Susan C. Scott (University Park, PA, 1992), pp. 89–129.

of sea-trading ventures in a math problem in the 1247 treatise *Book of numbers in nine sections*:

Problem: Assume there is a seagoing junk that has been to the customs station and fulfilled its obligations. Apart from the goods to be paid to the shipowner, there remain 5,088 ounces of gharuwood, 10,430 packets of black pepper of forty catties each, and 212 pairs of elephant tusks. These have been brought by (merchants) A, B, C, and D as the result of their trading with joint capital. A declares to the government that his capital consisted of 200 ounces of gold, four bales of salt, ten *tao* of paper money, that B's capital consisted of 800 ounces of silver, three bales of salt, and 88 *tao* of paper money, that C's capital consisted of 1,670 ounces of silver and fifteen *tao* of ordination certificates, and that D's capital consisted of fifty-two *tao* of ordination certificates and fifty-eight ounces, eight *shu* of gold. The total value of the foregoing is estimated at 424,000 strings of cash. A has borrowed B's paper money, B has borrowed C's silver, C has borrowed D's ordination certificates, and D has borrowed A's gold. The goods borrowed are now returned to their original owners. Establish the ratio for an equitable distribution of the commodities first mentioned. It is desired to know what the original value of the gold, silver, bales of salt, and ordination certificates were, and how much gharuwood, pepper, and ivory each man should have received.⁶

We will return to the oddest form of capital mentioned in this problem – ordination certificates – further on. Here the point is that this is not a business manual but a work of (for its time) higher mathematics. For its author, currency conversion came easily to mind as matter for an algebraic exercise.

All these examples emerge from the world of educated elites – though the painters who peddled their wares outside the Academy and painted market subjects were not always literati. We will see further on that a spreading tendency, crossing lines of class as well as genre, to record daily experience and value it quantitatively owed something to broad contact with money and the keeping of accounts. In a sphere verging on the popular, Stephen West has shown that many of the tunes of Sung opera were borrowed from the advertising jingles of street peddlers.⁷ The competing claims of commercial hawkers frame just one of several new Sung arenas in which multiple mutually exclusive claims were articulated in public (newspapers, competitive promotion of gods, and ideological factional conflict being three others), and it can be argued that such competition produces new anxiety over problems of truth and belief, as evidenced in Sung miracle tales, which circulated among elite and commoners alike.⁸ Monetary influences on the thinking of ordinary people may in fact be

⁶ Shiba Yoshinobu, *Sōdai shōgyōshi kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1968), p. 118. My rendering slightly modifies Mark Elvin's in his 1970 abridged translation, *Commerce and society in Sung China* (Ann Arbor, 1970), pp. 32–3.

⁷ Stephen H. West, "Playing with food: Performance, food, and the aesthetics of artificiality in the Sung and Yuan," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic studies* 57 No. 1 (June 1997), pp. 67–106.

⁸ Robert P. Hymes, "Truth, falsity, and pretense in Song China: An approach through the anecdotes of Hong Mai," *Studies in Chinese History* 15 (2005), pp. 1–26.

easiest to find in **religion**, since this where our sources best inform us on **popular practice**. In modern Chinese religion it is a commonplace that we are born bearing a debt: a deposit of money, placed in a spiritual account at the grant of a new life, which must be repaid in life or afterward through good works or new deposits of spirit money – paper facsimile money burned in offerings by the debtor or by his kin.⁹ This idea and its associated practices first appear in the Sung.

Payments of supernatural debt with spirit money appear in tenth-century tales, but the debt is unique to one person. The first known testimony that such debt is universal is a twelfth-century book, the *Scripture on the grant of life from the Celestial Treasury, spoken by the Heavenly Venerable of Numinous Treasure*. Here we learn that underworld officials deposit funds for each person, on loan from a Celestial Treasury, to an account whose changing balance will determine each person's welfare in life.¹⁰ The book sets out how much each person owes, depending on birth year, and the further amounts to be prepaid to assure future human rebirth. The text's images of the afterworld are Taoist, but its authorship is obscure, and its diction mixes vernacular words into an adequate classical Chinese. From other sources we know that southerners were burning spirit money to pay the debt by the 1170s, and these sources treat it as a Buddhist practice, not Taoist. Since the *Scripture* cannot be much younger than these and may well be older, the presence of the idea in all three suggests an earlier period in which it had spread across Taoist and Buddhist milieus. Thus the practice itself very probably originated no later than the early twelfth century.¹¹

In this heavenly debt that everyone alive must pay we surely see the inroads that money economy had made on ordinary mentalities, but probably a more specific stimulus too. In the 1070s Wang An-shih's reform regime introduced the **Green Sprouts Money**, a state loan of grain to farmers at planting, repayable in money at harvest. The aim was to ease rural credit, as private interest far exceeded the state's 20 percent. But in time the loans' money

⁹ On this and other uses of spirit money in modern China and their relation to petty capitalist and commercial modes of thinking, see Hill Gates, "Money for the Gods," *Modern China* 13 No. 3 (July 1987), pp. 259–77.

¹⁰ *Ling-pao T'ien-tsun shuo lu-k'ü shou-sheng ching, Tao-tsang* 333. On this text, and on the history of offerings of paper money in China, see Hou Ching-lang, *Monnaies d'offrande et la notion de trésorerie dans la religion chinoise* (Paris, 1975), which includes a full translation in French and traces the evidence that the practice actually occurred from the twelfth century on: see especially pp. 35–42 and 102–4. See also Livia Kohn, *The Taoist experience: An anthology* (Albany, 1993), pp. 343–50, for an English translation. My English rendering of the title follows Kohn except for one word: she uses "Loan of Life," while I make it "Grant of Life," a better literal equivalent in my view for *shou-sheng*. Nonetheless the process that the text describes is essentially a loan, as the "grant" must be repaid.

¹¹ The two dated sources are Wang Jih-hsiu, *Lung-shu ching-t'u wen*, preface dated 1171, and a story in Hung Mai, *I-chien chih, chih-chia* (Peking, 1981) 8: 775, also dated to 1171.

yield redefined their purpose, and critics reported that loans were forced on all farmers, needed or not. Thus in the 1070s the state makes farmers its debtors simply by virtue of farming, and **some time after the year 1100 a new religious practice makes everyone into a debtor to heaven simply by virtue of living.**¹² Surely this is both an outgrowth of money economy in general and a religious reimagining of a specific state policy. But as **Richard von Glahn** and others have argued, **the Green Sprouts loans and New Laws monetary taxation themselves first made money essential for many farmers, so a response to money economy and a response to state financial policy are not necessarily distinct.**¹³

All these are examples of the **commercializing of mentalities.** Lying at the junction of mentalities, religious institutions, and real monetary economics is the **sale of ordination.** Until the 1070s certification as Buddhist monk or Taoist priest required a scriptural test at the capital. In that decade the government, needing revenue for New Laws projects, first began regularly offering ordination for sale, and this continued (with one twenty-year break) through the dynasty.¹⁴ The religious consequences will emerge in the section on religious change; here the point is how the marketing of ordination certificates made them something more than mere religious credentials. The price of a

¹² This practice was not completely without precedent. Christine Mollier, in her *Buddhism and Taoism face to face: Scripture, ritual, and iconographic exchange in medieval China* (Honolulu, 2008), devotes an entire chapter (pp. 100–33) to the *Sūtra to increase the life account* (*I-suan ching*), a text of no later than the seventh century that appears in both Buddhist and Taoist versions. Several differences from the *Scripture of the grant of life* are important, however. In the first place “account” is not a particularly good rendering of the *suan* in the seventh-century texts’ titles: the meaning is closer to “increase the life count,” as the reference is simply to the sheer number of years determined by the divine authorities, not to an “account” in which one’s life-store is kept. Second, in *Sutra* the life-count is increased through appeal to controlling gods and the use of talismans: no process of “deposit” by the human being in question is prescribed. In texts of this vintage that do use a deposit metaphor, the store deposited to is a granary and the deposits are grain: this is the case in the T’ang text the *Petition almanac of red pine* (*Ch’ib-sung-tzu chang-li*), which Mollier cites (p. 102). In the third chapter of the *Petition almanac*, for example, the believer is urged to offer twelve bushels of rice “in order to increase one’s [life] count by multiplying one’s provisions, and to add to the quantities of grain stored in one’s granary.” The money offering that the same text recommends will be “to give surety of one’s true sincerity”; that is, it is a token to the governing spirits and *not* a deposit to one’s “granary” or to any sort of monetary account. Nor does there seem to be any notion of a loan here: one is simply storing up grain in a granary to support one’s life-years. In the idea that stored heavenly wealth can determine lifespan, there is a kernel of commonality with the Sung idea, but the difference between an earlier grain-based economy in kind and the growing monetary economy of Sung is nicely symbolized in the contrast between a granary in the earlier text and a loan-issuing money-storehouse in the later. See *Ch’ib-sung-tzu*, chapter 3, p. 20b (*Tao-tsang* 615).

¹³ Richard von Glahn, *Fountain of fortune: Money and monetary policy in China, 1000–1700* (Berkeley, 1996), p. 50.

¹⁴ The best account is Chikusa Masaaki, “Sōdai baichō kō,” in his *Chūgoku Bukkyō shakai shih kenkyū* (Kyoto, 1982), pp. 17–82. The twenty-year hiatus in ordinations, from 1142 to 1161, had a severe impact on the clergy: see *ibid.*, pp. 42–8.

blank certificate rose steadily, from 130 strings of cash to over 200 strings in late Northern Sung, to 500 or even 800 strings in Southern Sung, spurred by the demand for clerical status and perhaps the tax advantage that certificates conferred when signed,¹⁵ but also by their role as **speculative instrument** for those who could hold and resell them – for from the start the state offered them not only to would-be monks but to merchants, and the wealthy were always most able to acquire them. By the Southern Sung they were clearly a sort of **large-denomination currency**, or perhaps something closer to a **bond**. We have already seen them as just one form of capital in the math problem on sea traders. All this must be one of the stranger stories in religious history, but that Sung people could see a **religious credential as a financial and speculative good** shows the market's reach into thought and action alike. That the government could sell hundreds of thousands of certificates each year as of the 1070s also shows the vastness of the speculative market, or of the demand for large-denomination money, since no more than a small fraction could be absorbed by new real monks or priests each year.

This was hardly the only Sung case in which demand for money rearranged social furniture. The growth of the ceramics industry from T'ang on, and the technical advances that yielded true porcelain and other innovations in the Sung, were spurred by the **shift of gold and silver from the tables and halls of the rich into the monetary sphere**, where they were useful as high-value monies or stores of value. Ceramics then filled the gap.¹⁶ Meanwhile **the supply of bronze for religious images varied in Sung inversely to the value of copper money**: when it was cheap, bronze moved into the temples; when it was expensive, images were melted down to make homemade coin.¹⁷

Thus the demand for money changed patterns – how one entered the clergy, what a wealthy person (and then a broader populace) ate upon at home, whether one's temple held a Buddha image, and made of what – that in broad outline had been stable for centuries before. They bring us out of the realm of mentalities and into the sphere of practices, and here too one wants to know how far the market affected ordinary people. Without encroaching too far on the chapter on economy, suffice it to say that one can see the effect in many

¹⁵ This is a complicated question, however, as whether clerical status carried real tax advantages, and of what sort, is not as clear as sometimes assumed. See Moroto Tatsuo, "Sōdai ni okeru sōryo no zeiyaku mondai: toku ni menchinsen (seikansen) o chūshin toshite," *Akita Daigaku Kyōikugakubu kenkyū kiyō* 29 (1979), pp. 31–46.

¹⁶ On the development of the porcelain industry from T'ang through Sung see, for example, Margaret Medley, *The Chinese potter: A practical history of Chinese ceramics* (New York, 1976), pp. 75–164; and for a detailed introduction to many aspects of the Sung industry, see Hasebe Gakuji et al., eds., *Seikai tōshi zenshū*, Volume 12: Sō (Tokyo, 1977).

¹⁷ Jerome Ch'en, "Sung bronzes: An economic analysis," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (University of London) 28 No. 3 (1965), pp. 613–26.

forms, none easy to quantify. Commerce and money changed ordinary people's lives above all by multiplying the roles and relationships available to them. (I do not suggest that all such new roles and relationships were ones ordinary people *wanted*. Markets are media of power and compulsion as well as of opportunity.) As the chapter on economy shows, agricultural workers themselves fell into a striking variety of statuses and types, differing both between and within regions.¹⁸ Comparing the stories in the *Record of the Listener*, a compendium of occult gossip collected by the Southern Sung scholar and diplomat Hung Mai, to those in the *Broad records from the T'ai-p'ing era*, an imperial collection made largely from T'ang sources at the beginning of the Sung, strongly suggests that the categories of people that gossips' audiences might expect to hear about had multiplied in the centuries between. Alongside the older cast of official, religious practitioner, farmer, and perhaps innkeeper now appear a host of jobs and roles: storekeeper, wineseller, broom-maker, snail-boiler, kiln-worker, go-between, cook, congee-maker, boatman, cowherd, butcher, teacher, private secretary, gardener, musician, merchant large or small, and countless minor religious specialists. The Pure Land promoter Wang Jih-hsiu, in his special exhortations to various sorts of people on their respective sins, tailored specific advice not only to the classical categories of merchant and artisan but to doctors, cooks, winesellers, restaurateurs, and (of course) fishermen and butchers.¹⁹ The point is not that all these had not existed as economic specialists before, but that they loomed larger, and entered the awareness of elite gossips and Pure Land preachers to a new degree.

In the most commercial regions almost anybody might trade. Pao Hui (1182–1268) tells of the poor or middling people of the southeast coast who might hand a string of cash to sea traders and recoup their investment many times over.²⁰ On the way to Szechwan, Lu Yu's boat was crippled in rocky rapids, and while delayed ashore he learned that any project to reduce the danger would antagonize people living along the river, who depended on the money they made harvesting wood from damaged boats and trading with stranded passengers. Lu blamed the damage on his crew, who had overloaded

¹⁸ The literature on Sung land tenure and the status of cultivators is voluminous and very old. For important contributions especially relevant to the issue of regional and other variation, see Yanagida Setsuko, "Sōdai tochi shoyūsei ni mirareru futatsu no kata: Zenshin to henkyō," *Tōkyō daigaku Tōyō bunko kenkyūjō kiyō* 29 (1963), pp. 95–130; Joseph McDermott, "Charting blank spaces and disputed regions: The problem of Sung land tenure," *Journal of Asian Studies* 44 No. 1 (November 1984), pp. 13–41; Takahashi Yoshirō, "Sōdai denko no mibun mondai," *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 37 No. 3 (1978), pp. 64–91; and "Sōgendai no dohi, koyōjin, denboku ni tsuite: Hōteki mibun no keisei to tokushitsu," *Hokkaidō daigaku bungakubu kiyō* 42 (1978), pp. 113–92; and McDermott, "At the circumference: Land tenure in Sung K'uei-chou," in *Sōdai no seiji to shakai* (Sōdaishi kenkyūkai kenkyū hōkō daisanshū) (Tokyo, 1988), pp. 1–45.

¹⁹ Wang Jih-hsiu, *Lung-shu ching-t'u wen* (Kuang-hsi ed., 1883), 6.

²⁰ Cited in Shiba, *Sōdai shōgyōshi kenkyū*, p. 119.

the boat with crates of porcelain to sell in Szechwan.²¹ These were no merchants, but boatmen by trade, yet their sideline helped unite the upper and lower Yangtze in a network of trade and put people of one region in touch with the products and ways of another. Here was another effect of commerce: to bring people into new relations with others far away.

To claim a “national market” in the Sung on such bases would be provocative, for some argue that the late imperial “commercial revolution” outstripped that of Sung precisely in *routinizing long-distance trade in non-luxury goods, viewed as occasional and crisis-motivated in the Sung*.²² The view conflicts with Ch’üan Han-sheng’s work of sixty years ago showing the regular flow of rice from the middle Yangtze (Hu-nan, Chiang-hsi) to the delta, and the reliance of Southern Sung Hang-chou on products from Fu-chien, Kuang-chou (Canton), and Szechwan; and it ignores Hugh Clark’s proof of Ch’üan-chou’s reliance on annual shipments of Kuang-tung rice by mid-Southern Sung.²³ The issue may be one of degree. Perhaps *the national pattern of trade in Sung was less a single web than a fragmented sum of crisscrossing trans-regional or near-national markets, each for one category of good*. Rice yeastcake from Fu-chou in Chiang-hsi regularly moved through the Kan and Yangtze rivers to winemakers in a single delta county.²⁴ Not only were the nodes in different macroregions; also yeastcake was an industrial, not consumption, good. Yet no broader trade seems to have joined these two places. *There may have been many such single-purpose transregional links, often based in personal ties between single buyers and sellers, and one need not find a national market here, or solve the relation between the Sung and Ming–Ch’ing revolutions, to see that Sung trade tied people of different regions, often across very long distances*. It moved them long distances too. Sightseeing in Chiang-chou, Lu Yu found that most signatures on shop walls were of people from Szechwan – hundreds of miles upriver.²⁵ Tseng Feng’s (1142–?) testimony that crowded unproductive land pushed Fu-chien people into commercial and clerical roles elsewhere, so that Fu-chienese entertainers (his example) and monks

²¹ Lu Yu, 10th month, 13th and 14th days, in *Wei-nan wen-chi* 48, pp. 7b–9a.

²² William Rowe, “Approaches to modern Chinese social history,” in *Reliving the past: The worlds of social history*, ed. Olivier Zunz (Chapel Hill, 1985), pp. 236–96; Paul Jakov Smith, “Introduction: Problematising the Song–Yuan–Ming transition,” in *The Song–Yuan–Ming transition in Chinese history*, ed. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, MA, 2003), esp. p. 5.

²³ Ch’üan Han-sheng, “Nan Sung t’ao-mi te ch’an-sheng yü yun-hsiao,” *Kuo-li chung-yang yen-chiu-yüan li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-suo chi-k’an* 10 (1948), pp. 403–32; and “Nan Sung Hang-chou te hsiao-fei yü wai-ti shang-p’in chih shu-ju,” in *Sung-shih yen-chiu chi: Ti san chi* (1966), pp. 281–320. Hugh Clark, *Community, trade, and networks: Southern Fujian province from the third to the thirteenth century* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 145–8; cf. also pp. 158–63.

²⁴ Robert P. Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen: The elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 22.

²⁵ Lu Yu, 8th month, 7th day, in *Wei-nan wen-chi* 45, p. 17a.

were everywhere in China, is much cited in Sung historiography.²⁶ By 1177 journeymen wood-block carvers from Hang-chou were working in the printing industry in Chiang-hsi.²⁷ Trade may have ranked behind war in moving people across the Sung landscape; but especially in the south it did its part.

Of course not all regions were equally commercial. In studying Sung land tenure we now know to distinguish populous, highly commercialized regions like the lower Yangtze, with money rent, scattered holdings, and tenure contracts, from sparser, "backward" regions like Hu-nan and Hu-pei, with high land-labor ratios, manor-like estates, personal tenant-landlord ties, and restricted tenant movement.²⁸ But it is wrong to see these as almost of different times, with only the former fully advanced into the commercial age of the "early modern" Sung. For the estates of "backward" regions produced grain for the denser commercial regions downstream, and the legal binding and personal subordination of tenants were the labor-control methods of commercial farmers, enabling them to serve markets elsewhere. Thus however uncommercial life looked in less populous regions, it too was shaped by commercial opportunities. (We know this pattern of export-driven enforcement of unfree labor both from early modern Eastern European "second serfdom" and from American slavery.²⁹) Indeed, both landlord rule in these regions and certain phenomena in more developed regions may fairly be viewed as resistance to markets. With the high land-labor ratio of "backward" regions, a free labor market would have raised labor's price and (as workers moved off to settle empty land for themselves or as landlords competed for their services) made production for downriver markets prohibitively expensive. Thus landlords who, with state support, restricted tenant movement were blocking market forces locally to take advantage of markets elsewhere. In land-short populous regions, on the other hand, a relatively free labor market was disadvantageous to labor, not capital; so it was here that, in Southern Sung, serious rent-resistance movements emerged – tenants organizing to limit market forces just as landlords did upriver.³⁰ Naturally, however, tenants' market resistance did not gain state support, while market resistance by landlords sometimes did.

²⁶ Cited, for instance, in Shiba, *Sōdai shogyōshi kenkyū*, p. 429.

²⁷ Joseph P. McDermott, *A social history of the Chinese book: Books and literati culture in late imperial China* (Hong Kong, 2006).

²⁸ Yanagida, "Sōdai tochi shoyūsei ni mirareru futatsu no kata."

²⁹ On the Eastern European "second serfdom" of the fifteenth century and after, see, for example, Ivo Schöffer, "The second serfdom in Eastern Europe as a problem of historical explanation," *Australian Historical Studies* 9 No. 33 (1959), pp. 46–61. Schöffer considers a range of explanations critically and comes back to the opportunity presented by direct export to Western European merchants as the motivator for the effective enservement of agricultural labor. In the American case it is well known that slavery both solidified and intensified in the south after the demand of British textile mills for cotton made the least populous section of the United States the most heavily dependent on international trade.

³⁰ For tenant rent resistance in the lower Yangtze region and its concentration in Southern Sung, see for instance Yanagida, "Sōdai tochi shoyūsei ni mirareru futatsu no kata: Zenshin to henkyō," section 4.

One measure of the power of the market in the Sung is just such resistance: in the anti-market or non-market strategies that it provoked from a variety of actors and thinkers. In what follows we will see this in various forms, but from one source again and again: the Neo-Confucian (our term) or “Learning of the Way” (*Tao-hsiieh*) movement of Southern Sung that traced descent to the Ch’eng brothers and over which Chu Hsi (1130–1200) claimed leadership in the late twelfth century. Through the sections that follow we will see, piece by piece, that Chu and his followers proposed a broad program for **remoralizing society both through new institutions and through moral reform of individuals – no “turn inward,” but active alternatives to current practice. Neo-Confucians did not oppose the market in general.** Looking back at the battle a century before between the promoter of state economic power Wang An-shih and the conservative Ssu-ma Kuang (1019–86), who without personal sympathy for profit-oriented behavior still believed that **the state should mostly leave the private economy alone, they identified with Ssu-ma.** They seem to have **accepted private pursuit of wealth as legitimate or inevitable.** Yet again and again they **frame alternatives to the penetration of the market into parts of life they want to preserve as morally independent.** Their efforts are often innovative, not simply reactionary, but reaction is still what is going on.³¹

This tour of examples of the force of commerce in Sung – as it reached into disparate and distant areas of life, infiltrated patterns of thought, shaped actions, and at times met resistance or reaction – is a foundation for examining the effects of commercialization in the specific topical sections that will follow. First we must consider changes in the place of the state.

Changes in the state, and responses

We see a great deal of the state elsewhere in this volume, which there is no reason to duplicate here. The section will simply trace one recurrent direction of change in the Sung state’s relation to the society around it, comprising a net shift of power downward over time; and a set of reactions and responses to that change.

In other work I have used phrases like **“retreat of the state”** or **“shrinkage of state power”** to characterize changes that distinguish Southern from Northern Sung, and have focused on **expansions of private initiative** that filled the

³¹ For examples of a strong ambivalence about the market, buying, and material acquisitiveness that mostly does not rise to resistance but informs an important strand of Northern Sung elite thinking about culture, see Ronald C. Egan, *The problem of beauty: Aesthetic thought and pursuits in Northern Song dynasty China* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), especially chapter 4: “Art collecting and its discontents,” pp. 162–236.

gaps.³² The language is not wrong but too simple. There was retreat in many arenas; there may have been aggressive advance in a few others, as when even in Southern Sung the state (as Peter Golas shows in his chapter on financial administration) creates a southern paper currency by nationalizing the functions and holdings of southeastern private money shops. Sometimes the private moves that asserted a distance from the state in the Southern Sung responded to state overreach, not to state withdrawal. Thus the expanded use of unregistered contracts in private trade did not result from state inaction but reacted against rising state fees for registration.³³ What is fair to say is that during the Southern Sung, broad state retreat on many fronts coexisted with some attempts at state extension in a world in which the *overall* relation of the central government to society at large had grown more diffuse, less direct, and more varied by place, and was mediated by a wider variety of brokers and middlemen. This tended to shift practical power downward, on the one hand to the new middlemen, but especially to the interface between local administrators and local elites, or to local elites themselves.³⁴ The responses to this new configuration were varied and rich. This section only outlines the case, and will concentrate on clear or striking examples, some of which will be elaborated in later sections.

At its starkest, we can see the difference between Northern and Southern Sung in the absence of any real post-1127 equivalent to the reform regimes that begin with Wang An-shih and recur till the end of Northern Sung, regimes that saw the expansive private market (and with it private wealth and power) as the target and sometimes the medium for reform. Wang's New Policies set out a national blueprint for the limitation of private economic power, the use of both market-based and coercive means toward that end, the expansion of both revenues and bureaucracy, and (as an ultimate goal) the absorption of existing elites into the state structure. Reform institutions had varying fates in Southern Sung, many of them surviving as revenue devices or as structures of order maintenance, but they survived as pieces in a jumbled and locally varying set of practices in both arenas. No Southern Sung regime tried seriously to systematize these local structures nationally or make them uniform. That government would work differently in different places, a position some Northern Sung antireformers had stated as principle, seems to be accepted in Southern Sung as a fact of life. Golas in his chapter shows the decentralization of Southern Sung financial administration. In quite a different realm, the

³² Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, *passim*, but especially chapter 8.

³³ See Valerie Hansen, *Negotiating daily life in traditional China: How ordinary people used contracts*, 600–1400 (New Haven, 1995), pp. 78–112. See also Peter Golas's chapter in this volume.

³⁴ None of this excludes the rising extraction levels that may characterize Southern Sung as well. The question is not how much was extracted but where decisions on extraction were made.

Northern Sung state had recruited Taoists for its religious projects – including the Taoist theocracy of Hui-tsung's reign – from every part of the country with something like an equal hand. In Southern Sung it drew Taoist aid almost exclusively from two local centers, one near the capital and one in Chiang-hsi, giving these places unique roles in state religion and turning state-authorized Taoist ritual into a local specialty.³⁵ Practices of taxation, order maintenance, and law were often idiosyncratic to single prefectures, and surviving Southern Sung legal judgments often cite precedents specific to place. The state interface with society was nowhere quite the same as anywhere else.

By itself this would have shifted the site of much political action and negotiation down toward the local. But other trends worked in the same direction, though their mechanisms differed. In some arenas the government deliberately shifted responsibility to nongovernmental actors and/or the market at large. An example is the long-term trend in both the salt and southeastern tea monopolies away from direct state production and marketing toward merchant-mediated systems that approached simple licensing.³⁶ In the large cadastral (*ching-chieh*) survey of early Southern Sung, the state asked landlords to prepare and submit the base maps of their own properties rather than undertaking the ground-level survey with its own personnel.³⁷ Smaller and perhaps less obvious examples appear elsewhere in this chapter. One was the move away from direct regulation of clerical membership to sale of ordination certificates that we have seen in the previous section, which shifted initiative to private actors with the wealth to buy certificates. Another, to be explored in the section on religion below, was state enfeoffment of local gods, which began in the ambition to control local deities through a selective process, but by Southern Sung had come to give local elites crucial voices in the process and often gave enfeoffment to any gods they promoted.

In a second category of cases the state aimed at continued control, but its failure allowed non-state actors to take on roles it would have preferred to monopolize or to forbid. An example are the private newspaper printers of late Northern and Southern Sung we will see in the next section, illegitimate in official eyes but thriving by supplementing or substituting for the state's own capital gazettes and other channels of information to officials and the

³⁵ Robert P. Hymes, *Way and byway: Taoism, local religion, and models of divinity in Sung and modern China* (Berkeley, 2002), pp. 173–81, esp. 176.

³⁶ On tea, see Hua Shan, "Ts'ung ch'a-yeh ching-chi k'an Sung-tai she-hui," in his *Sung-shih lun-chi* (Chi-nan, 1982), pp. 55–111; and cf. T'o T'o, *Sung shih*, 184. I am grateful to Paul Smith for finding these citations for me when I called upon him in emergency. On salt, see Tai Yi-hsuan, *Sung-tai ch'ao-yen chib-tu yen-chiu* (Peking, 1981).

³⁷ Ruth Mostern, "*Dividing the realm in order to govern*": *The spatial organization of the Song state (960–1276 CE)* (Cambridge, MA, 2011), p. 243.

populace. Another example in that section, again a late Northern and Southern Sung phenomenon, is the private legal advocates or “pettifoggers” who usurped functions that the state and gentlemen wished filled only by judges or state-licensed scribes’ shops. A third and, for the state, more threatening example is the private militias that sprang up in early Southern Sung, sometimes with state encouragement but often only with its tolerance, in response to the weakness of official armies against Jurchen encroachments and to maintain local order.³⁸ Finally, the Southern Sung court found itself unable to control consistently even such a basic aspect of governance as the division of its territory into administrative units, as interested locals were increasingly able to decide the abolition, survival, and location of counties and so on, either resisting state initiatives or propelling them.³⁹

Finally, in a third category the state, for lack of interest, will, or funds, simply got out of the way, stopped doing what it had long done, and let private parties and the market fill the gap, or not, as they would. Often they did. Here we may place a wide range of shifts and omissions. In late Northern Sung the state largely gave up granting titles to Buddhist monasteries, with consequences for the relation of clergy to powerful laity that we will see further on. As Ruth Mostern has shown, the Northern Sung state maintained careful procedures and a large central apparatus for generating, mapping, and storing highly detailed geographical information on the empire. Each prefecture was required to submit a full mapping of its localities to the capital Bureau of Operations every three years, and circuit intendants were required to submit circuit-level maps every ten. This apparatus began to decline in the reform period of the 1070s, partly because changes in administrative units happened in such large numbers that prefectures and the bureau could not keep up. Initiative in mapping the empire began to shift toward private scholars, and this shift became complete in Southern Sung, when the Bureau of Operations was finally closed and the central government simply abandoned the responsibility for mapping that it had taken so seriously before. Private cartography and geography, however, were never able to fill the resulting gap adequately.⁴⁰ The Southern Sung state also abandoned the massive government printing projects so influential in Northern Sung (see the next section), but here commercial printers successfully filled the gap. Even the abolition of the central government’s school for courtesans that we will see in the section on gender belongs here: from then on many of the courtesans required for government banquets came to be drawn from the private commercial market. Somewhere

³⁸ See, for example, Huang K’uan-ch’ung, *Nan-Sung shih-tai k’ang-Chin te i-chün* (Taipei, 1987); see also Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, pp. 136–50.

³⁹ Mostern, “Dividing the realm”, p. 253. ⁴⁰ Mostern, “Dividing the realm”, pp. 90–9.

between this category and the previous one lies the **failure of government relief strategies** in Southern Sung, stimulating the development of private substitutes like the **community granary** (*she-ts'ang*) or private charitable granaries (*i-ts'ang*), though these hardly filled the gap.⁴¹

These three new state tendencies – **delegation of responsibility**, **ineffective attempts at control**, or **deliberate withdrawal** – **attracted private stand-ins**, whether from the commercial market (as with books and courtesans), local strongmen (as with militias), or gentlemanly elites (as with local relief). A much broader issue was the failure, willy-nilly or by choice, of the state's structures of official recruitment to **absorb a steady proportion of the ever-growing elite of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries**. Only Wang An-shih's reforms, with their vision of "making *shih* and *li* one" (gentlemen and officials respectively), had aimed at the **bureaucratic expansion** that this would require, but this vision no longer stood a chance in Southern Sung. Had officialdom been more absorptive of elites, the **provincially based academic-political networks** that are a recurrent feature of post-Southern Sung south China, and which have their first example in the Learning of the Way of Southern Sung, would surely have been harder to form and maintain.

But to see the Southern Sung state as simply opening gaps that others might fill or exploit is to overlook an important aspect of the picture. This is **the long legacy of the more systematically activist Northern Sung state as first initiator, as model for action, and as influence in later private and local practice**. Again and again Northern Sung state action set the model for or jump-started processes and ways of acting that would thrive in the private economy or among local elites in the later Sung. It is worth mentioning some examples.

As we have seen, the very scope of Sung commercialization may owe something to Northern Sung state action: if **Richard von Glahn** is right, the Green Sprouts loans and other new money-based forms of extraction under **the New Laws monetarized large rural margins of Sung society that had until then used money only fitfully** (though they may already have participated in the market through trade in kind).⁴² **In Southern Sung the Learning of the Way borrowed the Green Sprouts model wholesale for its private, gentleman-led community granaries**. Moreover, the **rural monetarization** accomplished in this period was apparently never reversed but remained as a reform legacy and a basis for the commercialization of many aspects of rural commoner life over the rest of the Sung.

⁴¹ Richard von Glahn, "Community and welfare: Chu Hsi's community granary in theory and practice," in *Ordering the world: Approaches to state and society in Sung dynasty China*, ed. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 221–54; Linda A. Walton, "Charitable estates as an aspect of statecraft in Southern Sung China," in *ibid.*, pp. 255–79; Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, pp. 151–76.

⁴² Von Glahn, *Fountain of fortune*, p. 50.

The huge state printing projects of the Northern Sung, as we will see in the next section, shaped trends in private commercial printing by providing templates for cheaper commercial reprints and by revealing the market for particular texts, which commercial printers would in turn exploit. The civil service examinations themselves, and their success in drawing in gentlemen in the course of Northern Sung – shaping an elite that partly defined itself by its capacity to take part in the examinations – fostered models of reading, study, and self-advancement that elite culture in Southern Sung would both replicate and react against. Eventually, of course, the massive body of students and examination candidates that the state had nurtured became an interest group with influence of its own. It became hard to change the examination curriculum and thus hard for the state to exert cultural influence, because any change would alienate the huge number of people with accumulated intellectual capital in the older curricular regime, who might even react with violent protest.⁴³

In the religious sphere again, we will see further on that the very idea of sponsorship and promotion of particular local deities as a matter of public display among local elites, so prominent in Southern Sung processes of enfeoffment, may first have been stimulated by the state program of enfeoffments itself that begins in late Northern Sung.⁴⁴ The push that the state Buddhism of the Northern Sung gave to the Ch'an school through imperial sponsorship likewise positioned it for the leading role it played in private competition among Buddhist schools for the rest of the Sung, and one wonders whether the lay officials and gentlemen who became the school's leading patrons after the state backed off saw themselves as stepping into imperial shoes.

Stepping into state shoes became almost an explicit principle of the local institutional projects of the Learning of the Way in Southern Sung.⁴⁵ Each of the local institutions that Chu Hsi promoted directly replicated a state-imposed institution of Wang An-shih's reform program, but in non-state form. Wang had envisioned the prefectural and county schools that first became universal under his regime as an eventual substitute for the examination system, since unlike the examinations they allowed personal contact, informed recommendation, and judgments of candidates' character. Chu Hsi offered instead the local academy – also imagined as an alternative to the examinations, and in some of the same ways, but founded privately and locally

⁴³ On violent protests by examination candidates in reaction to various presumed abuses, including changes of examination criteria, see John W. Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning in Sung China: A social history of examinations*, 2nd ed. (Albany, 1995), pp. 3, 4, 69–70, and 73.

⁴⁴ Hymes, *Way and byway*, pp. 144–6.

⁴⁵ See Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer, "Introduction," in *Ordering the world: Approaches to state and society in Sung dynasty China*, ed. Hymes and Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 22–5.

around the person of a single teacher. For the *pao-chia* system of mutual surveillance based in decimal units imposed by government, Chu offered the community compact, a voluntary organization based (in imagination) in natural communities, but similarly aiming at local order through mutual monitoring and admonition.⁴⁶ For the Green Sprouts Policy, as we have seen, Chu offered the private and voluntary loans of the community granary. We will see in the religion section that one of these institutions, the local academy, looks central also to Chu's program of alternatives to the institutions of both clerical and market-based religion. But this two-faced character is quite real: in the academy's focus on the person of a single Confucian teacher and its de-emphasis of office-oriented or success-oriented learning, it was an alternative and thus a rebuke both to the patriarch-centered but ostensibly world-rejecting monasteries of the Ch'an Buddhists and to the examination-oriented learning of the state schools. The point is that in offering an alternative to the schools and other institutions of the reform regimes Chu also borrowed heavily from their models. Here we see the ghostly reach of the Northern Sung state precisely in a Southern Sung reaction against it. If the moralizing program for social life of the Learning of the Way reacted against the cultural and social penetration of the market, it reacted against the penetrating state or its historical echoes as well, and it was able to do so because the state in fact penetrated less.

The Sung state, then, affected the directions of Southern Sung society both through its own actions and through omissions that tended to shift the locus of active power downward toward the localities, but it had already affected those directions at some distance through the patterns it established and the examples it set in its highly activist phase in Northern Sung. We will see the whole range of relationships of state change to social change traced here in the sections that follow: first of all in the next section, on printing and reading.

PRINTING AND READING

One sometimes reads that the impact of printing in China was shallower than its later impact in Europe. Often this claim arises from ignorance of China, but sometimes it may reflect an awareness of the longer time Chinese printing seems to have taken to make a decisive impression on society at large. Book printing, after all, began in China no later than the seventh century, but was for some time afterward limited (as far as we know) to Buddhist religious contexts. Historians generally agree that it did not become a common medium of reproduction and transmission of other texts before the

⁴⁶ The community compact virtually never achieved reality in the Sung, but became real and influential, in considerably altered form, in the Ming and Ch'ing.

Sung, and not decisively before the eleventh century.⁴⁷ What took so long in China?

In a chapter on the Sung there is not room to dwell on what we know of the developments of the seventh through mid-tenth centuries.⁴⁸ It may well

⁴⁷ For printing in the Sung, see Thomas Francis Carter, *The invention of printing in China and its spread westward*, revised by L. Carrington Goodrich (New York, 1955); Chang Hsiu-min, "Nan-Sung (1127–1279) k'e-shu ti-yü k'ao," *T'u-shu-kuan* 1961:3, pp. 52–9; and *Chung-kuo yin-shua shih* (Hang-chou, 2006), especially Volume 1, pp. 40–161, and Volume 2, pp. 529–40 and 656–61; Su Pai, "Nan-Sung te tiao-pan yin-shua," *Wen wen* 1962:1, pp. 15–28; L. C. Goodrich, "The development of printing in China and its effects on the Renaissance under the Sung dynasty," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch* 3 (1963), pp. 36–43; Sidney O. Fosdick, "Chinese book publishing during the Sung dynasty (A.D. 960–1279): A partial translation of 'Istoriia Kitaiskoi Pechatnoi Knigi Sunskoi Epokhi' by Konstantin Konstantinovich Flug, with added notes and introduction" (MA thesis, University of Chicago, 1968); Ming-sun Poon, "Books and printing in Sung China (960–1279)" (diss., University of Chicago, 1979); Hok-lam Chan, "Sung laws and regulations on publication and circulation," unpublished paper presented at the conference on "The Transformation of Chinese Law, T'ang through Ming," sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies and the Rockefeller Foundation, Bellagio, 1981; Denis C. Twitchett, *Printing and publishing in medieval China* (London, 1983); Susan Cherniack, "Book culture and textual transmission in Sung China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54 No. 1 (1994), pp. 5–125; Thomas H. C. Lee, "Books and bookworms in Song China: Book collection and the appreciation of books," *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies* 25 (1995), pp. 193–218; Sören Edgren, "Southern Sung printing at Hangzhou," in *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities (Ostasiatiska Museet)*, Stockholm 61 (1989), pp. 1–212; Lucille Chia, *Printing for profit: The commercial publishers of Jianyang, Fujian (11th–17th centuries)* (Cambridge, MA, 2003); and "Mashaben: Commercial publishing in Jianyang from the Song to the Ming," in *The Song–Yuan–Ming transition in Chinese history*, ed. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 284–328; Joseph McDermott, *A social history of the Chinese book*; and the relevant sections of Inoue Susumu, *Chūgoku shuppan bunka shi* (Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku shuppankai, 2002), pp. 109–90. I am grateful to Lucille Chia and Hilde De Weerd, and to the authors of the individual articles, for their permission to read their articles in advance of publication in *Knowledge and text production in an age of print: China, 900–1400*, ed. Lucille Chia and Hilde De Weerd (Leiden, 2011). Especially useful in that volume for my argument in this section as a whole is Ronald Egan, "To count grains of sand on the ocean floor: Changing perceptions of books and learning in the Song dynasty," pp. 33–62.

⁴⁸ For the seventh-century story, a fascinating one involving more than one woman, and the rest of the T'ang, the essential reference is now Timothy Hugh Barrett, *The woman who discovered printing* (New Haven, 2008). As I do, Barrett in the end explains the gap between the invention of printing and its extensive application to non-religious material and to books in particular as (partly) the result of the lack of a market, but with a twist. While I point to a commercial revolution that had not yet come, Barrett points to a demand perhaps quite well filled by manuscript production through much of the T'ang. While his sources that suggest that gentlemen could easily put together large collections of manuscripts, and that manuscript production in the T'ang had more in common with printing, in speed and volume of production, than with European manuscript production, are fascinating, I find it hard to account, on his evidence, for the Sung reports – by men in a position to remember the late stages of a mainly non-printing culture – that books were now simply very much easier to get than before. On the latter point, see also Ronald Egan, "To count grains of sand," p. 38. The suggestions I offer below on the hiatus of printing after its possible sponsorship by Empress Wu, largely derived from Barrett, may do a good enough job of explaining things without supposing that manuscript culture could supply as many books as readily as print. We know that manuscript use survived as one element of book culture well into Sung, with even a preference for manuscript among the most cultivated literati (see below), but not apparently on the basis of any mass production of manuscripts.

be, however, that the longer gap between origin and general use of printing in China reflects the fact that in Europe book printing appeared within a fifteenth-century society already fairly commercial; whereas in China the wider use of printing, on the one hand, and a burgeoning commercial economy, on the other, grew up in tandem, while the invention itself long preceded the commercial revolution of late T'ang and after.⁴⁹ Timothy Barrett has made a plausible case that the first extensive use of book printing may have occurred under the auspices of the Empress Wu of the T'ang and her Buddhist adviser Fa-tsang in the first years of the eighth century. Insofar as the regimes that came after shied away from her example in many arenas, any association of printed books with her reign may have tainted them in the eyes of later rulers. Our earliest surviving printed works from China are all Buddhist-associated, but, as also emerges from Barrett's argument, monasteries were the owners of considerable sunk capital in their large staffs of manuscript copyists; their considerable interest in this enterprise is indicated by the fact that the state prohibited private copying of sutras and thus granted them an effective monopoly. Did this inhibit them for some time from turning heavily toward print to satisfy the considerable demand for Buddhist works? Between them the state and the monasteries were the largest centers of capital accumulation in medieval China, and a wider use of printing awaited the rise of other centers of capital and commerce.⁵⁰

This view gains support from the fact that our strongest early evidence of printing outside Buddhist and court contexts comes primarily from ninth-century Szechwan, at that time probably China's most commercialized region, and secondarily in the same period from the Yangtze delta, also already relatively commercial. Thus in the year 835 an imperial edict forbade privately

⁴⁹ The difference between block printing, the main medium of book printing in China before modern times, and the movable-type printing that sparked the printing revolution in Europe – though often seized upon as a crucial difference by European historians – is not a realistic candidate for a causal role in any difference in the speed or depth of impact of printing. The Chinese writing system made block printing particularly appropriate and movable type less practical except for particularly large print runs of a text, as was noted by the perceptive Shen Kua, the world's first recorded witness of movable type, present in China by the 1040s. On this point, see among others, Twitchett, *Printing and publishing*, p. 76; Barrett, *The woman who discovered printing*, pp. 11–13; McDermott, *A social history of the Chinese book*, p. 23. But given an adequate supply of the relatively skilled labor needed for blockcarving – and this was clearly present by the Sung – there is no evidence that block printing posed any sort of bottleneck for Chinese production of printed books: the opposite is evident in the easy production of printed newspapers at brief intervals and handbills or broadsheets on a moment's notice, as early as the Sung – on these, see below. In fact block printing had its own significant economic advantages, including the ease of producing additional short runs or single copies to order at irregular or long intervals without significant additional inputs of labor, assuming space was available for the long-term storage of blocks once carved.

⁵⁰ On the role of Buddhist monasteries as capital accumulators in medieval times, see Jacques Gernet, *Les aspects économiques du Bouddhisme dans la société Chinoise du cinquième au sixième siècle* (Saigon, 1956).

printed calendars, which were circulating throughout the empire ahead of the state's own official calendar but were printed mainly in Szechwan and the lower Yangtze.⁵¹ In the year 883 the T'ang official Liu P'ien encountered printed books in the market of Ch'eng-tu (Szechwan): these were works on dream divination and geomancy as well as dictionaries and other reference works, though Liu tells us they were crudely printed and hard to read, suggesting that they were intended for an audience socially lower than the office-seeking elite.⁵² By the late ninth and tenth centuries printed books were also sold in Ch'ang-an,⁵³ and some elite use of print is also known already in the ninth century.⁵⁴ But the Sung upsurge of printing rested on, and simultaneously fed, the rise of a market in the form of an expanding audience: a class of people interested in acquiring books and education rapidly. The rise of new elites and, as we shall see, sub-elites and the expansion of book printing depended on and reinforced each other.

In the upsurge in book printing of the tenth century and after, the state plays a major role. Even before the Sung, states of the northern Five Dynasties and southern Ten Kingdoms printed and distributed culturally central texts. The first imprint of the Confucian Classics was a product of the northern Later T'ang court, begun in 932 and completed in 953 under its successor the Later Chou; in the south, the Wu-yüeh kingdom centered at Hang-chou printed Buddhist sutras in 956 and 975.⁵⁵ Ming-sun Poon has traced the rapidly expanding output of the Northern Sung Directorate of Education, ranging from the Classics and commentaries, through dictionaries and philological works, dynastic histories, encyclopedias, works of astronomy and mathematics, treatises on military learning and agronomy, to Taoist and occult writings.⁵⁶ The printing of medical works was a project of more than one Northern Sung emperor or chief minister. They aimed to spread literate medicine and displace the spirit mediums who, to the state's distress, had the loyalty of much of the south Chinese population when facing what we

⁵¹ Wang Ch'in-jo et al., *T's'e-fu yüan-kuei* 160, p. 9a.

⁵² The *locus classicus* in English-language work for both this reference and that of Wang Ch'in-jo above (n. 36) is Carter, *The invention of printing*, pp. 60 and 65–6 n. 21, which gives in effect a capsule bibliographic history of its citations, of which the earliest is Yeh Meng-te (1077–1148) in the Sung. See Yeh Meng-te, *Yen Yü (T's'ung-shu chi-ch'eng ed.)* 8, p. 74a.

⁵³ See Seo Tatsuhiko, "The printing industry in Chang'an's Eastern Market in the Tang dynasty," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tōyō Bunko* 61 (2003), pp. 1–42.

⁵⁴ See Timothy Hugh Barrett, "Religion and the first recorded print run: Luoyang, July, 855," in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 68 No. 3 (2005), pp. 455–61, on the alchemical work of Hōkan Chi printed in that year; and Christopher Nugent, *Manifest in words, written on paper: Producing and circulating poetry in Tang dynasty China* (Cambridge, MA, 2010), pp. 245–6, recounts the printing of the monk Kuan-hsiu's literary collection by his disciple Tan Yu some time after 896.

⁵⁵ Poon, "Books and printing," pp. 18 and 116–17. ⁵⁶ Poon, "Books and printing," pp. 113–27.

today would call illness.⁵⁷ Many Directorate publications became the authorized editions of the texts required of examination candidates. As such they were seized upon, in the eleventh century and after, by commercial printers who reproduced Directorate editions for students and scholars at lower prices. Commercial printers produced an ever-widening range of books for examination candidates, from classical texts with multiple commentaries or reordered for ease of reference; through rhyming dictionaries, especially useful for the required poetic composition; to a pair of genres the state outlawed: collections of previous successful examination essays, which students were eager to use as models, and miniature editions that could be smuggled into the examination hall itself in the sleeve – cheaters' texts.⁵⁸

In this sort of publishing, commercial printing clearly played a role dependent, even parasitic, upon the state's massive publication projects and its examination enterprise. In these respects state impact is crucial. But one can carry this too far. Some work on Sung printing has promoted the view – not always explicitly stated – that in Northern Sung the state was dominant, calling commercial printing into being only through the stimulus of its own projects and of the examination system; and that in Southern Sung, as the state withdrew, commercial printing first came into its own. Poon's work in particular draws an arc like this one, but it is common property. The direction of the arc is not wrong, but it probably greatly underestimates the role of non-state printing already in Northern Sung and the speed with which commercial printing advanced. The reality was closer to constant interaction between state and private printers from very early in the eleventh century; and it is from that interaction – in which the state is a strong protagonist – and not from a position of monopoly that the state retreats in Southern Sung. There are many reasons to think that the underestimate of nonofficial printing goes along with an underestimate of the number of printed books

⁵⁷ For my understanding of these developments I am in debt to T. J. Hinrichs, whose dissertation brilliantly illuminates the Sung state's campaigns for physicians and against spirit mediums. See T. J. Hinrichs, "The medical transforming of governance and southern customs in Song dynasty China (960–1279 C.E.)" (diss., Harvard University, 2003). As Hinrichs points out, however, block printing was not the first or always the chief means that emperors and local officials used to spread knowledge of medical writings: carving of texts on stone stelae was an earlier resort and remained an important medium right through Northern Sung. She makes the excellent point that it was the government's ideologically driven impulse to transform custom through medical knowledge, not the technology of printing, that was in the driver's seat, since while printing thrived after Northern Sung no later Chinese state made similar efforts to distribute medical texts. See Hinrichs, "Governance through medical texts and the role of print," in *Knowledge and text production in an age of print: China, 900–1400*, ed. Lucille Chia and Hilde De Weerd (Leiden, 2011), pp. 228–9.

⁵⁸ For the use of printed reference works in the examinations, see also Hsiang-kwang Liu, "Yin-shua yu k'ao-shih: Sung-tai k'ao-shih yung ts'an-k'ao shu ch'u t'an," *Kuo-li cheng-chih ta-hsueh li-shih hsueh-pao* 17 (May 2000), pp. 57–89.

in (say) the eleventh century, in relation to the number that circulated still in manuscript.⁵⁹

First, one can see an opposite dependence – of state printing upon private printing – from the very start of the Sung. **It was the products of a Szechwan commercial printer that first interested the Sung founder in printing.**⁶⁰ The first massive Sung state project, the 971 Buddhist canon, was printed in K'ai-feng from blocks carved in Szechwan. Evidently the trained labor needed to carve 130,000 blocks was more available in the pre-existing commercial/private printing world of Ch'eng-tu than in the capital. For seven different Northern Sung printing projects, the first in the year 994 and the last in 1086, the Directorate turned to carvers in Hang-chou, who again must have belonged to the private/commercial printing sphere.⁶¹ Shipping thousands of wood blocks by water from the lower Yangtze region to the north China plain under protected conditions (water can wreak havoc upon printing blocks) was too expensive to attempt if not truly necessary.⁶² This again shows just **how much more easily available the labor and expertise for printing were outside the capital and outside state hands than within – and note: not simply in the private economy, but in the southern private economy in each case.**

Second, direct testimony to the vitality of commercial printing from early in Northern Sung comes in **officials' repeated complaints to the court about privately printed books and the court's answering decrees of prohibition.** Poon notes such memorials and/or edicts in the year 1009, when the complaint was of collected works containing unorthodox ideas; in 1027, when **the fear was that writings of officeholders were being exported to the Liao state, risking leaks of state secrets;** in 1055, when Ou-yang Hsiu attacked the export of anthologies and other printed works to Liao; and in 1090, when Su Ch'e did the same. In each case it was recommended or decreed that those wishing to print books be required to submit them to the Directorate of Education for approval, that other printing be forbidden, and (in 1027, 1055, and 1090) that offending blocks be found and destroyed. The fact that **preapproval by**

⁵⁹ I had drafted this section before I became acquainted with Ronald Egan's very important treatment of some of the same matters, and was pleased to discover that he had come to the same position on the earlier importance of non-state printing and on how early printed books were common and important in Northern Sung. A revised version of the paper he shared with me has appeared as Egan, "To count grains of sand."

⁶⁰ Poon, "Books and printing," p. 23. ⁶¹ Poon, "Books and printing," p. 18.

⁶² Note that one cannot account for these cases by a shortage of wood in the capital region. If materials had been the only issue – if the labor had been as available in the capital as in the south – then the wood would surely have been shipped not in the vulnerable form of carved blocks, but as whole logs, as is still done today. This method, in which the logs simply float along in the river or canal, actually protects the internal wood from water damage better than the shipment of completed wood products in damp river air can.

the Directorate was decreed again and again tells us that the decrees were ineffective, and that many unauthorized works continued to appear. Similar edicts or memorials are reported in 1114 and, in Southern Sung, in 1145, 1155, 1159, 1177, 1180, 1198, 1199, 1201, and 1223; surely only the lack of institutional sources for late Southern Sung makes the series appear to end there.⁶³ The earnest insistence in edict after edict that books be submitted to the Directorate and that unauthorized books not be printed becomes comical when one reads the full series across two centuries. But the point is that the problem was already evident from the beginning of the eleventh century. And indeed, without a considerable presence of commercial printing even at the elite level from at least that time, it would be very hard to explain the remarks that become common from about the middle of the century on: that students are using illegal examination-prep texts instead of reading Classics, that they disdain manuscripts, that they no longer know how to collate editions, and that they have abandoned proper reading habits because of the ease of acquiring printed books.

Finally, the evidence from which scholars have inferred very slow progress of the printed word in Northern Sung does not really support the case.⁶⁴

⁶³ Poon, "Books and printing," pp. 47–53. Poon himself notes the abundant evidence that the prohibitions were not effectively enforced.

⁶⁴ It will be obvious, then, that I do not share Joseph McDermott's skeptical view of the progress of print versus manuscript in the Sung. See McDermott, *A social history of the Chinese book*, especially pp. 43–81; or agree in this respect with the analysis of Inoue Susumu on which McDermott partly relies. (See Inoue, *Chūgoku shuppan bunka shi*.) On the one hand our difference may be a matter of focus: McDermott is seeking to measure the Sung against the middle and late Ming, a period with its own book explosion, while my purpose is to place Sung in relation to what came before, and Southern in relation to Northern Sung. What looks like tremendous increase of printing and book production vis-à-vis T'ang might indeed turn out, when we have a better empirical understanding of these matters, to look more modest in comparison to what came two and a half centuries later. But I do not see the case as made yet, because I do not find McDermott's comparative evidence convincing. Complaints by gentlemen of the difficulty of finding books may not tell us much, especially in the absence of good comparative data on such complaints (or, implausibly, their absence) from mid-Ming on. To whatever degree Sung gentlemen remained fond of manuscripts and snobbish about inferior imprints in particular, not being able to find a book may have meant not being able to find the right copy of a book. Complaints may also simply reflect that supply is not, or is barely, keeping pace with growing demand even as supply is also growing. The drop in the cost of production for printed books that McDermott points to for the middle Ming in comparison to Sung (pp. 26–8) is very poorly supported from the Sung side: McDermott tells us that "up to the early Ming the transcriber might be the author of the text, his disciples, his friend, his son, or even a respected calligrapher," but this can only apply to private gentlemanly editions, not to the products of commercial printers, so that the emergence of the "mere [hired] transcriber" and accompanying cheaper script McDermott points to for Ming surely came much earlier, as McDermott (p. 207 n. 89) notes Lucille Chia has suggested (see Chia, "Mashaben," p. 202). At the other chronological end the case for a decline in transcribing and carving costs in Ming rests on synchronic data on the rates paid at the palace in the eighteenth century for varying levels of script (p. 29). But when a faster and easier script form comes into play (assuming that it did come into play in Ming instead of much earlier), it would be perfectly natural then for the older, slower, more elaborate form to slot itself in as a higher-status

Surviving catalogues do suggest that the largest and most prestigious collections of books in the Sung empire – both the imperial library and important private collections – contained mainly manuscripts, and both Poon and Chang Hsiu-min find that collections grew larger in the Sung than ever before.⁶⁵ Inferences about the proportions of printed works and manuscripts in circulation are unsafe. In catalogued collections we see the choices of collectors, for whom gathering books is an act of cultural preservation, aesthetic appreciation, and status display as much as of use. Ronald Egan shows that manuscripts retained higher prestige value and were preferred for their own use by prominent intellectuals and literary figures through much of Northern Sung,⁶⁶ and we can only expect such preferences to be magnified in the case of the largest collectors: antiquarianism and a stress upon the rare must have given manuscripts the advantage for a long time. What collector will treasure and show off what just anybody can buy in the market?⁶⁷ To expect catalogued libraries to mirror the market is like expecting literati catalogues of paintings and porcelains to tell what the average Sung person – even the average Sung gentleman – hung on his wall or ate upon. In the case of the imperial library, the government's role not only as printer and distributor, but also as mandator of particular editions, may have led printed works to become, for emperors, potential instruments of mass direction and control – in which case it would be appropriate that most of the books held authoritatively at the center be of a different, non-mass character. By the time

and higher-priced product. Under those circumstances its price may well increase, so that the synchronic data cannot stand in for diachronic comparative data for the costs before the change of script and after. I have already commented on the dominance of large collections of manuscripts, which McDermott notes as another piece of evidence. McDermott acknowledges the weakness, by themselves, of some of these bits of evidence, but in the end falls back (p. 62 ff.) on the numbers and nature of surviving imprints across time, as catalogued by Inoue. Lucille Chia, in a fine book built almost entirely around the evidence supplied by surviving imprints, has argued eloquently against the use of extant imprint numbers to trace the quantitative advance of printing over time: for Sung it is particularly inappropriate precisely insofar as collectors had a preference for manuscripts and thus did not undertake to preserve imprints, which would skew rates of imprint survival from the Sung downward; but it is inappropriate also for its neglect of whole strata of printing at which the highest levels of the gentlemanly stratum might have turned up their noses but which may have been very important for their stratum as a whole nonetheless – for students in particular. See Chia, *Printing for profit*, pp. 145–6. Chia's point in my view largely undermines both McDermott's and Inoue's use of extant imprint numbers to reconstruct printing's progress.

⁶⁵ McDermott, despite his generally skeptical view of the degree of expansion of book culture in the Sung, agrees: "In general the Sung saw an increase in the number of collectors and in the size of the average collector's collection," though he goes on to note that Ming collections were bigger. McDermott, *A social history of the Chinese book*, p. 50. Cherniack, "Book culture and transmission," pp. 32–3; Poon, "Sung-tai ssu-chia ts'ang-shu k'ao," *Hua-kuo* 6 (1971), pp. 215–88.

⁶⁶ Egan, "To count grains of sand," p. 41.

⁶⁷ Again Egan has reached the same conclusion, on much more evidence than I offer here. See "To count grains of sand," pp. 36–41.

printed works came to be sought by collectors in middle Ming, time and attrition had made possible the rare or unique *printed* book.

Similarly we cannot deduce the frequency (or the infrequency) of printing in general from the fact that as late as 1057, according to Ou-yang Hsiu, most cheaters' texts that candidates carried into the examinations were hand-copied.⁶⁸ These texts, tiny enough to fit in a palm, had no possible legal purpose. A lag was natural before printers entered this market, when already engaged in a contest of registration and evasion, enforcement and relaxation, with would-be state registrars over perfectly ordinary books. Copyists got high fees for risking tiny cheaters' texts in manuscript, but their work did not leave the incriminating evidence that printers risked with blocks. Yet by late Northern Sung commercial printers, too, were producing **palmbable books**,⁶⁹ and we should see here **not a sign of the rise of private printing, but a measure of printers' increasing escape from state regulation**. Even books whose sheer existence was legally indefensible could now be printed without enough risk of punishment to inhibit their producers.

Print surely had not yet moved as far in Northern Sung as it would in Southern Sung: the numbers of printing centers we can document for each period by themselves would suggest this conclusion. Egan proposes a plausible take on the continuing preference for manuscripts among the most cultivated:

In a perhaps unexpected way, during this era of the advent and spread of book printing, the copying of manuscripts gained new meaning. Ironically, the more imprints there were the more the act of copying was revered and even perceived by some as necessary. In the eyes of the elite, the older generation, or the conservative-minded of any generation, printed books were for those who did not truly care about books.⁷⁰

Looking back to the lowly and illegible printed Classics and so on of the Ch'eng-tu marketplace in T'ang, it is plausible that printing, in its tenth-century rise, and after (though not at) its moment of invention, was a **gradually encroaching technology of the "lower": the less highly literate, or the upwardly mobile, or finally, in Sung, students – of whose corruption by print their more cultivated teachers complained. Manuscript copying in this period was an individual pursuit**, undertaken largely one copy at a time: there is no evidence in the Sung of the kind of mass production of manuscripts that both state and monasteries had pursued in the T'ang – state and Buddhist

⁶⁸ Cited in Poon, "Books and printing," p. 109. Poon speculates that printing technique had not advanced far enough by 1057 to produce books so small. If this were true, it would be further indication that the proportion of cheaters' texts that was printed is no measure of the proportion of books in general; but he presents no direct evidence for the technological claim.

⁶⁹ Poon, "Books and printing," p. 110; Egan, "To count grains of sand," p. 38.

⁷⁰ Egan, "To count grains of sand," p. 41.

establishments were deeply engaged in printing now – and without these it is hard to imagine how manuscripts can have continued to occupy a large proportion of the books available to literati (even if disdained by them) no matter how small the print runs. When literati carefully copied out manuscripts for their own collections from others' originals that might be either imprints or manuscripts themselves, it would be consistent with Egan's evidence and argument to see **their manuscript preference as a reaction against an abundance of print, not a mere continuation of older patterns.** In other cases, though, they may simply have continued the habits of manuscript culture in a sphere which print had yet to reach. Egan notes, "Individual literary collections, especially those from earlier times, mostly continued to circulate in manuscript form, to the extent that they circulated at all."⁷¹ Yet even this, probably true as a generalization, is qualified by the emperor Chen-tsung's decree as early as the year 1009: "We hear that individuals' literary collections are now compiled in large numbers, and the quantity of them that have been engraved and printed is large. If they are permitted to advance heterodox notions, they will lead the younger generation of students into erroneous ways."⁷² These were the products of private and commercial printers, of course. Remarkably, the emperor in this case did not simply prohibit the printing of such collections, but asked provincial authorities each to review the collections circulating from its own region, to print those it judged suitable, and to forward a copy of the imprint to the court.

We should thus see **private and commercial printers as already a strong counterpart to state printing efforts, and sometimes their subverter, from early in Northern Sung.**⁷³ This is important because it makes it credible that printing had considerable impact on access to education, and thus on other social and cultural phenomena, from early in Northern Sung – or indeed, given what we have seen of commercial printing in ninth-century Szechwan and Chiangnan, even before. On all of this, more below. It does not follow that the state's historical impact was small: we have seen that commercial printers borrowed directly from the state's printed works for their own products, and above all the **state's projects were important in making printed works more respectable among the educated stratum.** That is, not only did the state signal to private printers, by its own products' success, where a demand lay that they could then

⁷¹ Michael Fuller has seconded this from his own work (personal communication, July 24, 2013): "The case of the 'Jiangxi school' in poetry suggests that in the last three decades of the Northern Song, the major poetry disseminated via manuscript copy at a personal level, but **by the 1140s, print began to be important in creating an account of the 'Jiangxi poets' for the national Southern Song elite.** From there on out, **print plays a role in shaping poetic practice.**"

⁷² Cited in Egan, "To count grains of sand," p. 53; my translation follows his.

⁷³ Cf. Egan, "To count grains of sand," pp. 36–42.

work to meet even more effectively, but it also actively shaped that demand. The genres the state promoted through its printing and through the examinations were central for private and commercial printers long after the state had largely withdrawn from the field. And withdraw it did: in Southern Sung, as Poon shows, Directorate production slowed to a trickle. If state agents still printed in order to shape learning and culture, they now did so mainly in the person of the individual local administrator, spending his own salary or funds of his office to produce an edition of a classical, historical, or poetic work. One motive was that printing could produce income usable for other governmental purposes.⁷⁴ Private noncommercial printers – a son issuing a father's works on a vanity-press basis, a private academy or monastery printing books for students or acolytes – also played a role. But the gap left by retreat of the central state was mostly filled by commercial printers. These ranged (by one count) across some two hundred centers, virtually throughout the south, compared to the thirty or so for which evidence survives from Northern Sung.⁷⁵ Particularly important were Hang-chou and Chien-chou printers, already major players in the Northern Sung, who came to occupy the high- and low-quality ends of the industry in gentlemen's eyes. Here commercial houses, often run by a single family pursuing the trade for generations, offered texts ranging from the Classics, commentaries, histories, and dictionaries that had dominated Directorate production; through legal compendia, medical works, prose collections, poetic anthologies, and the *Four Books* and their commentaries, central texts of the new Learning of the Way; to Buddhist and Taoist scriptures, encyclopedias for daily use, and fiction; and of course the semi-legal and illegal examination texts.⁷⁶ Hang-chou products bore a name for elegance and editorial care. The cheap "Ma-sha" editions of the Chien-chou houses were thought rough, slipshod, and editorially unreliable, but contemporaries tell us that they spread throughout the empire and abounded in the markets in every city.

The inability of the Sung state to control private printing, which partly motivated its own withdrawal from book production, also short-circuited a remarkable development of Southern Sung: attempts by authors to use the

⁷⁴ See Egan, "To count grains of sand," p. 36 n. 7, on a local administrator funding the building of a banquet hall from a lucrative printed edition of Tu Fu's poems.

⁷⁵ "For which evidence survives" is a crucial qualification, however, as our knowledge of where printers were is highly dependent on the survival of imprints, and in this the Southern Sung share overwhelms that of the Northern Sung, as one would expect simply from the sheer passage of time and from the considerable destruction brought by the Jurchen conquest in the north and by the Sung-Chin wars even in many areas of south China. For the Northern and Southern Sung estimates, see Chang Hsiu-min, *Chung-kuo yin-shua shih*, p. 59, and "Nan Sung (1127–1279 nian) k'e-shu ti-yü k'ao," p. 56. See also Su Pai, "Nan-Sung te tiao-pan yin-shua."

⁷⁶ For the Chien-chou book trade in Sung, see the excellent study by Lucille Chia, *Printing for profit*, especially chapters 3 and 4; for Hang-chou printers, see Sören Edgren, "Southern Sung printing at Hang-chou," especially pp. 4–66.

state to establish something like copyright for their works. A few surviving thirteenth-century imprints still bear notices on their first or last page that the author has applied for and received an order from the local government that his work may not be reprinted without his permission. This phenomenon was apparently unique to the Sung in premodern China, and its failure to survive – or possibly to be applied to more than a very few books in the Sung – suggests that such orders, once applied for and granted, were largely a dead letter, as the government's guarantee that a book could not legally be reprinted was largely unenforceable. That a concept of private authorial right or privilege capable of being sanctioned by the government emerged in this period, however briefly, is a remarkable historical phenomenon in itself.⁷⁷

What we have seen so far are texts whose audience was likely to be both educated and elevated: examinees, their teachers, and the larger gentlemanly or *shih-ta-fu* stratum from which both came. How far down the social scale did printing and its products reach? A secure quantitative answer is beyond reach, but there is strong evidence for a culture of printed texts that reached well beyond the high-cultural artifacts of the gentlemanly elite – though in some parts of it gentlemen certainly participated too. The ground is tricky, because the further we move from the most respectable products of *shih-ta-fu* culture on the one hand and the scriptural canons of Buddhism and Taoism on the other, the more we lack the imprints themselves, filtered as they are by collectors' habits – beginning with Sung collectors' preference for manuscripts. For books that have not survived we depend on secondary evidence. For some we have testimony to the texts themselves. But the rise of new sorts of literate people – a new stratum of semi-respectable literate service providers – is also evidence for the broader reach of texts that only printing was able to provide.

We begin to see this wider penumbra of printed texts and their users in the complaints of the highly educated and the state. The critical tone in which gentlemen spoke of the cheap Ma-sha editions from Chien-chou seems to reflect not only scholarly but social disdain: books that were too cheap might be read by the wrong sort of people. The state in turn worried not only about books, but about other printed media too. Chu Chuan-yü has shown the spread of a genre something like the newspaper in the Sung capital and thence to the rest of the country.⁷⁸ Beginning as a private imitation

⁷⁷ Hok-lam Chan, "Sung laws and regulations on publication and circulation," paper presented at the ACLS-Rockefeller Conference on "The Transformation of Chinese Law, T'ang through Ming," Bellagio 1981, pp. 58–63.

⁷⁸ Chu Chuan-yü, *Sung-tai hsin-wen shih* (Taipei, 1966), especially pp. 67–86. The author's English summary, "A history of Chinese journalism in the Sung Dynasty," published in *Synopses of monographical studies on Chinese history and social sciences* 5 (October 1969), pp. 67–88, provides a rough idea of the book's contents and arguments.

of the official “capital reports” (*ti-pao*) that sent news of appointments and other court actions to a strictly bureaucratic audience in the capital and the provinces, the “little reports” (*hsiao-pao*) of K’ai-feng in Northern Sung and Hang-chou in Southern Sung peddled unauthorized news of the same sorts – leaked memorials, court debates, and other officially secret material – in urban markets to any who could afford them. By Southern Sung their producers made a good deal of money. The memorials and decrees that complain of these papers often do not tell us whether they are handwritten or printed, but Chu is surely right that the very rapid distribution that is cited in official complaints about them by Southern Sung times implies that by then they were usually printed. Probably they were printed much earlier, since other sources protest the printing and sale of faked and tendentious edicts in the capital as early as the year 1069,⁷⁹ and of genuine up-to-the-minute military dispatches and memorials as of 1126.⁸⁰ In 1127, when the court tried to retract the amnesties that had been issued in the name of the Chin’s puppet state Ch’u, it found they had been privately reprinted and sold in thousands of copies, beyond hope of recall.⁸¹ These protests do not use the term “little reports,” and some of their targets may have been single-topic handbills, but they are clearly cognate products. One assumes that literati too read these proto-newspapers, but with open sale in marketplaces they surely reached a broader audience. When a fake edict condemning the chief councilor Ts’ai Ching circulated in the capital in the year 1111, the emperor’s responding edict worried that the fabrication would “stir and deceive the hearts of the multitude.” This was a cliché for promoting popular disorder; it did not mean only officials and literati.⁸²

Apart from political reportage and comment, printed handbills, pamphlets, and posters could play a number of other roles, and here it is often clear that the target audience is broad. A judgment by Sung Tz’u (fl. 1217) tells the following story:

When I came to the post of judicial intendant of Chiang-hsi, there was a certain lineage of the Ch’en surname who had originally had the most intimate ties with Yang Tzu-kao. Later they fell out over money and grain, and [the Ch’ens] were set against one another by [Yang], who presumed on his powerful position to slander them to commanders Meng and Ma, who beheaded their father and confiscated their property. Now Ms. Ch’en too has brought suit to the Chiang-hsi judicial intendency. She has furthermore printed up in quantity a ballad about their wrongs, and distributed and posted it across four circuits.⁸³

⁷⁹ *Sung hui-yao chi-pen* (Taipei, 1964), *hsing-fa* 2, p. 34, cited in Chu, *Sung-tai hsin-wen shih*, p. 77.

⁸⁰ Hsu Meng-hsin, *San-ch’ao pei-meng hui-pien*, 94, cited in Chu, *Sung-tai hsin-wen shih*, p. 157; and Wang Tsao, *Ching-k’ang yao-lu*, 9, cited in *ibid.*, p. 159.

⁸¹ Hsu Meng-hsin, *San-ch’ao pei-meng hui-pien* 95, cited in Chu, *Sung-tai hsin-wen shih*, p. 155.

⁸² *Sung hui-yao chi-pen*, *hsing-fa* 2, p. 53, cited in Chu, *Sung-tai hsin-wen shih*, p. 77.

⁸³ *Ming-kung shu-p’an ch’ing-ming chi* (Peking, 1987), p. 465.

Thus a printed flyer could carry a protest not simply to a magistrate or to officialdom but to readers in four provinces – an apt means to shame a rival and tormentor. Neither the Ch'ens nor Yang Tzu-kao were officeholders, and they are not referred to in a way that would suggest they are gentlemen. Getting the flyer printed and distributed presumably took some wealth. News of divine intervention could be spread in the same way:

Pai-niang, the daughter of the Wang family of Ming-chou, was widowed young and had no one to rely on. Her uncle through her mother, the Secretary Ch'en An-hsing, took her along whenever he traveled to office. For years she had suffered from fevers. In the third year of Shao-hsi (1192), she was suddenly struck deaf and dumb and could not communicate. She could recognize characters a little, and when she wanted something, she could only write it down on paper. Replying in the margin of one of her notes, Ch'en granted her request to devote herself to the bodhisattva Kuan-yin in the hope of winning compassion. Thus she paid her worship day and night without cease. Whenever she was in bed, she looked to be in contemplation; and she would always see the upright and grave auspicious form [of Kuan-yin], who instructed her lovingly, urged her to offer rites to the Western Buddha Amitabha as well, and personally gave her a four-line hymn [to Amitabha] . . . telling her further: "You should urge all the world to chant this." Within a month, her two afflictions were suddenly healed – yet she had never resorted to doctors or medicine. Ch'en declared her pure and perfect in her single-minded concentration, and had printing blocks carved to propagate this far and wide.⁸⁴

It is not absolutely clear whether Ch'en printed the whole story or simply the hymn itself; it seems likely it was both. Here at least the propagator is an officeholder, but it is unlikely that he thought to promote a miracle story "far and wide" among a gentlemanly audience alone. Chou Mi (1232–98) told of a similar case: in 1240, when his own father jestingly promised to support the enfeoffment case of a god in his administrative jurisdiction only if the god produced a lasting rain within three days, it rained the next day and through the night. "The people of the neighborhood, thinking that Mr. Chou was able to communicate with spirits, composed a song to praise him, cut the story onto printing blocks, and peddled it in the marketplace."⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Hung Mai, *I-chien chib* (Peking, 1981), *chib-ting* 1, p. 969. This anecdote is cited both in Chia, *Printing for profit*, chapter 3; and in Valerie Hansen, *Changing gods in medieval China, 1127–1276* (Princeton, 1990), p. 73. In their reading it is Ch'en himself who prays to Kuan-yin. The text is not without its difficulties, and the line I have translated "Replying in the margin of one of her notes . . ." is particularly oddly phrased, but I believe my reading is the correct one. (More literally the line would read: "Ch'en, instructing her by a marginal note, had her devote herself to . . .") The protagonist of a story like this one would not generally be presented as seeking to celebrate his *own* purity of religious concentration in print.

⁸⁵ Chou Mi, *Kuei-hsin tsa-shih* (Beijing, 1988), pp. 19–20. I am grateful to Noga Ganany for alerting me to this source by presenting the text in my seminar in the spring of 2013.

Such printed propaganda may have been especially common in the religious sphere. In the 1270s the Learning of the Way scholar Huang Chen, governing a Chiang-hsi prefecture, encountered a printed tract that disturbed him.

I went out yesterday to fetch the new decrees and saw, posted on the Wen-ch'ang Bridge, a printed poster entitled "Commentary of the Wu-yüan Shrine." This must be the work of followers of the head of some spirit-medium shrine who are here to delude and bully our people. I have ordered the three wardens to remove and destroy the posters everywhere in and out of the city, and to find and expel these people. I have posted notices before the prefectural office urging our people to respect themselves, to fear Heaven and Earth, to obey their parents, to honor the state's laws and the Way of the world, and not to err in this way.⁸⁶

The phrase "delude and bully our people," another cliché, again signals that Huang is worried about the broad populace, as does the content of the posters he hangs in response. It is not clear whether his are printed too, but the government often did use printing for posters of this kind, and the case reveals a printed struggle for ordinary hearts and minds that may have been rather common.⁸⁷ Huang thinks a broader and socially lower public is reachable through printed media like the spirit-medium posters, and wishes to reach it himself. Printers and stationers also turned out paper deity images and auspicious symbols for pasting on walls of houses, and these were aimed at the widest possible market.⁸⁸

Printing could carry commercial messages too. If recent Chinese sources are accurate,⁸⁹ the oldest known printed advertisement in the world is an

⁸⁶ Huang Chen, *Huang-shih jib-ch'ao* (SKCSCP ed.) 78, pp. 47b–50a. For a discussion of this piece and of Huang's broader efforts to suppress unwelcome religious manifestations in this post, see Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, pp. 187 ff.

⁸⁷ On the use of posters, chiefly governmental but also private, see also Chu, *Sung-tai hsin-wen shih*, pp. 127–53.

⁸⁸ On these, see for instance Susan Shih-shan Huang, "Tianzhu Lingqian: Divination prints from a Buddhist temple in Sung Hangzhou," *Artibus Asiae* 67 No. 22 (2007), p. 259, and her "Early Buddhist illustrated prints in Hangzhou," in *Knowledge and text production in an age of print: China, 900–1400*, ed. Lucille Chia and Hilde De Weerd (Leiden, 2011), pp. 135–65. Though it lies outside the Sung-defined boundaries of this volume (yet falls in the same period), on print as a medium of religious propagation, see also Lucille Chia, "The uses of print in early Quanzhen Daoist texts," in *ibid.*, pp. 167–213.

⁸⁹ My qualification reflects the lack of clarity in the scholarly literature on the provenance and dating of the plate. Digital images of the plate available on the internet do not help the situation, as they seem to show that in fact two plates exist, in very different condition as regards the clarity of the characters and seeming to bear at least partly different text in the body of the advertisement. (The caption is identical in both.) I suspect that one is the original and that the other is an "improved" facsimile engraving produced at some point for display to museum-goers or other audiences. For scholarly treatments, see Wang Po-min, *Chung-kuo pan-hua shih* (Shanghai, 1961), pp. 51–2 (note that Wang's own preface is dated 1957); Pai Kuan, *Chung-wai tao-ch'i kuang-kao chen-tsang yü p'ing-hsi* (Peking, 2003), p. 1; Chung-kuo li-shih po-wu-kuan (Peking), *Chung-kuo ku-tai shih ts'an-k'ao t'u-lu: Sung Yüan shih-ch'i* (Shanghai, 1991), p. 109; and for a full discussion of the history of scholarly treatments of the plate, see Zhu Lei, "Chūgoku ni okeru kōko no dentō" (The tradition of advertising in China) (diss., Tokyo Keizai University, 2005),

eleventh-century handbill for a needle shop in Chi-nan (in modern Shandong), surviving in the form of the copperplate from which it was printed, and bearing the shop's name ("Chi-nan Liu Family's Skillful Needle Shop"), a celebration of its wares, and a picture of a rabbit holding a needle, with the caption, "You'll recognize the white rabbit before our gate as our mark." The accompanying text proclaimed, in part, that the shop "buys steel of the top grade and fashions slender needles of good workmanship."⁹⁰ This is not the only such artifact to survive into recent times: in 1961 Wang Po-min reported the existence of another, considerably later, advertising printing plate, in this case for a drugstore and bearing a clear 1272 date, from which he had seen a printed-off paper copy.⁹¹

Such examples are rare in surviving Sung sources, but suggest an iceberg of which they are the tip, a world of print and text culture in which both elites and a broader population took part. For none of them really makes sense as something unique or even unusual. One will spend money to print a ballad protesting one's wrongs only if an audience is used to reading or singing (or having read or sung to them) ballads transmitted in writing and in print. One will celebrate a miraculous cure or rainstorm, promote a spirit-medium sect, or advertise a needle shop or drugstore in printed handbills or posters only if audiences exist for these too. Huang Chen assumed the spirit-medium sect could reach an audience through printed posters, and reached out to it with his response. We cannot guess the number of people who could read consecutive prose discourse in the Sung, but from practices like these we can deduce that it was significantly broader than the *shih* stratum; and that printing, along with commercial distribution, offered it a wider range of writing, quicker and more cheaply, than would have been possible earlier through hand-copying. More: it is reasonable to suppose that the broader audience in considerable measure arose and grew together *with* and partly *because of* the spread of printing and

pp. 67 and 156–9. On the probable origin of the shop's white rabbit symbol in the myth of the medicine-pounding rabbit in the moon, see Zhu Lei, p. 67. Zhu traces Chinese references to the plate back to Wang Po-min's work, written in 1957 and published in 1961; he accepts its genuineness and a Northern Sung date, but largely on grounds of plausibility, based on evidence in other Sung sources that advertising handbills were indeed printed from bronze plates already in this period. Note that *Chung-kuo ku-tai shih ts'an-k'ao t'u-lu*, cited above, dates this plate to Southern Sung; but if that is correct, then it is really a product of the Chin dynasty, since its text is quite clear that the shop it advertises was in Chi-nan, which of course at the time of Southern Sung was under Chin control.

⁹⁰ My translation renders the same term, *kung-fu*, as "well-made" in its first appearance and by the more strictly accurate "of good workmanship" in its second. There seems no convincing way in English to work "good workmanship" in an adjectival role into a shop sign. Gernet sees this shop as an acupuncturist's establishment, which seems inconsistent with the handbill's text, though part of this is illegible in the photographs I have seen. See Jacques Gernet, *Daily life in China on the eve of the Mongol invasion*, 1250–1276 (Stanford, 1962), p. 172. T. J. Hinrichs called my attention to Gernet's citation of this handbill.

⁹¹ Wang Po-min, pp. 51–2; see also Lei Zhu, p. 158.



Figure 1. "Chi-nan Liu Family's Skillful Needle Shop" (Sung advertisement)

the wider and cheaper access to texts that it offered. We cannot easily imagine the growing *shih-ta-fu* elite itself without commercialization and the new opportunities for wealth it yielded, or without printing and the easier access to book learning that it allowed.

But again it was not only the gentlemanly sort that market-based printing and increasing text-access helped to multiply. A crop of new or growing text-based occupations sprang up in the Sung, all of questionable respectability in the eyes of gentlemen. Three striking examples are literate but not-quite-literati physicians, legal advocates or pettifoggers, and new religious practitioners. The section on religious change will take up a new sort of Taoist or Taoist-like exorcist, some of whose members may be part of the same story. As

to doctors, we find from Northern Sung onward a new debate among literati about the place of the physician – the man for whom medicine was an occupation, his sole or chief living – in relation to the gentleman who dabbled in medical knowledge and texts, perhaps even became expert in them, but for whom medicine was in no sense a job. For literati were now more often encountering, and often admiring, occupational physicians not of literati standing but whose knowledge was yet, like their own, based in texts.⁹² Some such men even produced medical texts of their own. This created an overlap between gentlemen's and doctors' self-definitions that intrigued some gentlemen and fueled new educational and institutional measures by reformers.

Thus the New Policies regimes of Northern Sung set up new medical schools and new official medical career paths in both the capital and the provinces, built on textual curricula and examinations. The point was to draw men of *shih* status into medicine more than to incorporate existing doctors-for-a-living into a special sort of officialdom, though the latter may have been the result. In any case the reforms made a very strong statement – if ultimately an ineffectual one – for one view of the place of medicine in relation to gentlemanly status. Without broader access to textual learning, and without the printing that allowed that access, neither the overlap nor the debate would have come into being when it did.⁹³

There was no similar debate among Sung gentlemen over the status of “pettifoggers.”⁹⁴ The difference may show us the place of litigation in elite self-views, or it may only show that while gentlemen often needed professional doctors for their own well-being, at law they were privileged and expert litigants themselves by status and training. In that context, professional advocates, like the pettifoggers that both state and literati complain of in the Sung, filled a gap precisely by offering their services to non-elite and non-literate clients, which might level a field otherwise tilted toward both magistrate and gentleman. That a physician-for-hire treated non-literati was no skin off an

⁹² Angela Leung has commented on the opportunity that printed texts opened to gain medical knowledge and take up practice as an autodidact. See Angela Leung, “Medical learning from the Song to the Ming,” in *The Sung–Yuan–Ming transition in Chinese history*, ed. Paul Jakob Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, MA, 2003), pp. 393–4.

⁹³ For these and related issues, see Robert P. Hymes, “Not quite gentlemen? Doctors in Sung and Yuan,” *Chinese science* 8 (January 1987), pp. 9–76; and Ch'en Yüan-p'eng, “Liang-Sung te 'shang-i shih-jen' yü 'ju-i' – chien lun ch'i tsai Chin-Yüan te liu-pien” (MA diss., Kuo-li T'ai-wan ta-hsüeh li-shih-hsueh yen-chiu-so, 1995); and “Sung-tai te ju-i – chien p'ing Robert P. Hymes yü-kuan Sung-Yüan i-che ti-wei te lun-tien,” *Hsin shih-hsüeh* 6 No. 1 (1995), pp. 179–202. I am grateful to T. J. Hinrichs for calling Ch'en's work to my attention.

⁹⁴ The reform administrations did similarly promote the training of legal specialists in a special school of law at the university in the capital, but these were envisioned not as advocates out among the populace, but as better judges and consultants to judges in office.

elite nose, for **medicine is not a zero-sum game**. That **a paid advocate should sell his services to others might cost gentlemen and judges dearly in the power they otherwise wielded in court**. It is significant that **of all the new schools for occupational or technical specialists that the reform administrations established for a time in the late eleventh century (medicine, law, mathematics, astronomy/astrology, painting, calligraphy), only the school of law excluded all applicants who were not already degreeholders or officials, explicitly preventing the school from serving the advancement of men neither already in office nor recognized as *shih* but with background in the law.**⁹⁵ We know of pettifoggers, unlike doctors, only through the attacks on them. The earliest surviving mention comes from Shen Kua (1030–93), already in late Northern Sung, and centers precisely on a text which circulated at something like the popular level:

For generations it has been said that Chiang-hsi people love to sue. They have a book called the *Teng Ssu-hsien*, which consists entirely of forms and methods for lawsuits. It first teaches how to alter documents; if altering documents doesn't work, then false charges will gain the end; if false charges don't work, then one finds something [one's adversary] is guilty of so as to threaten him with that. Presumably *Ssu-hsien* is a man's name, and people are handing down his techniques and thus gave his name to the book. In village schools they often teach pupils using this book.⁹⁶

Shen Kua does not give a name to the people who teach litigation with this book, but it is striking that in Southern Sung, when complaints against pettifoggery and the drumming up of lawsuits multiply, one of the standard terms for the men complained of is **"litigation teachers" (or "litigation masters"), *sung-shih*, implying that instruction remains at least part of their role**. The term *Teng Ssu-hsien* itself survived into the Yüan dynasty, two centuries later, as a jesting title for men of the same sort, suggesting that **either this very text or a written tradition descending from it survived as well.**⁹⁷

In Southern Sung the state, too, took note of these books and teachers. In 1143 the Board of Rites reported,

Officials have submitted an administrative memorial: "In the prefectures and counties of Chiang-hsi the commoners love lawsuits; among the books they teach to their boys and youths are such things as the *Miscellaneous characters in four-character lines*, which is all language of complaints and suits. [The officials] request this be assigned to the relevant authorities for prohibition." The Directorate of Education, examining this carefully and

⁹⁵ Thomas Lee, "Technical officers, legal bureaucrats and special training schools in Song China," unpublished paper presented at the Berkeley Regional Seminar in Confucian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, December 7, 1979, p. 22.

⁹⁶ Shen Kua, *Meng-ch'i pi-t'an* (Taipei, 1977), 25, p. 807.

⁹⁷ T'ao Tsung-i, *Cho-keng lu* (SKSCSP ed.) 15: 21a–b, cited in the commentary to Shen Kua, *Meng-ch'i pi-t'an*, p. 807 n. 1.

checking precedents, has found in the *Edicts of Shao-hsing*: “Whoever gathers pupils and instructs them in litigation documents shall be beaten a hundred strokes with the heavy rod. Reporting by private parties is allowed. Repeat offenders, whether before or after an amnesty, shall be placed under registered control in a nearby prefecture. Those who study with them shall each be beaten eighty strokes with the heavy rod.” The *Miscellaneous characters in four-character lines* consists entirely of documents for teaching lawsuits. When there are violators their crime should be judged according to the above article.⁹⁸

The emperor approved the proposal. That the Directorate of Education was asked to rule on the case suggests that the book was printed. Both Shen Kua and this record place the books in Chiang-hsi circuit, but as this region had long been thought given to conflict and litigation, complaints of Chiang-hsi litigiousness were a virtual trope. “Litigation masters” and pettifoggers are not only a Chiang-hsi phenomenon, and show up in many judgments from elsewhere in south China in Southern Sung.⁹⁹ Other names are “disciples of uproar,” “demons of uproar,” “inciters,” and “coercers,”¹⁰⁰ since Sung judges pretended that ordinary people would sue only if tricked or forced – that the problem lay with the pettifoggers, not with those they aided. But clearly the market for pettifoggers’ services was lively, both as teachers of litigation and as advocates.¹⁰¹ While we can infer printing in the Southern Sung case, Shen Kua does not explicitly tell us that his Northern Sung text was printed; but again printing and resulting cheapness of texts must lie in part behind the broader extension of literacy – of a fairly high and specialized degree in this instance – that would allow such a vocation to emerge in the Sung.

⁹⁸ *Sung hui-yao chi-pen, hsing-fa* 3, p. 26. I owe the reference to Miyazaki Ichisada in his “The administration of justice during the Sung dynasty,” in *Essays on China’s legal tradition*, ed. Jerome Alan Cohen, R. Randle Edwards, and Fu-mei Chang Chen (Princeton, 1980), pp. 71, 75 n. 49. On Chiang-hsi’s reputation for litigiousness, see also Miyazaki Ichisada, “Sō-Gen jidai no hōsei to saiban kikō: Gentenshō seiritsu no jidaiteki, shakaiteki haikai,” *Tōbō gakubō* 24 (1954), pp. 115–225, reprinted in Miyazaki, *Ajiashi kenkyū*, Volume 4 (Kyoto, 1964), pp. 179–305; in the reprint, see especially pp. 246–9. Miyazaki cites testimony to this effect from a number of sources stretching from early Northern Sung into Yüan.

⁹⁹ A judge named Ma Yü-chai, for instance, blamed the prevalence of lawsuits in the Chekiang region on “a layer of rootless ‘disciples of uproar’ who lacking any other skill or enterprise support themselves through this.” See *Ming-kung shu-p’an qing-ming chi* (Peking, 1987), p. 484; and Brian E. McKnight and James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien), trans., *The enlightened judgments: Ch’ing-ming chi: The Sung dynasty collection* (Albany, 1999), p. 449, where the translation slightly differs.

¹⁰⁰ The terms are *bua-t’u*, *bua-kui*, *chiau-suo-jen*, and *pa-ch’ih-jen* respectively. My translations follow Melissa Macauley, whose work is the best statement on litigation masters from Sung through Ch’ing. See Melissa Ann Macauley, *Social power and legal culture: Litigation masters in late imperial China* (Stanford, 1998), especially pp. 1–33.

¹⁰¹ On Sung litigation masters and pettifoggers, see also Ch’en Chih-ch’ao, “Sung-tai te shu-p’u yü sung-shih,” in *Ryū Shiken bakase shōju kinen Sōshi kenkyū ronsbū*, ed. Kinugawa Tsuyoshi (Kyoto, 1989); Akagi Ryūji, “Nansōki no soshō ni tsuite: ‘kenshō’ to chihōkan,” *Shichō*, new series 16 (March 1985), pp. 4–20; Kusano Yasushi, “Kenshō to shohoko: Akagi hōkō ni yosete,” *Shichō*, new series 16 (March 1985), pp. 21–5. See also McKnight and Liu, *The enlightened judgments*, esp. pp. 440–50.

Litigation masters or pettifoggers, we know from Sung judgments, were sometimes from the families of clerks.¹⁰² Jao Tung-t'ien, founder of one of the new exorcist sects we will meet in the religion section, began as a prefectural clerk, specializing in law cases. In the Sung, unlike the T'ang, government clerks, despite literacy and numeracy, were virtually a despised caste for gentlemanly elites. It is tempting to see them as akin to the other groups we have been exploring: on this more in the final section.

If printing and the spread of books supported new forms of literate culture outside the elite, they also had significant impact on elite culture itself. Susan Cherniack and Stuart Sargent made important initial soundings of this question.¹⁰³ In scholars' responses to the changes they believed print had produced in the culture of their fellows, we see anxiety not unlike that over non-elite texts and literacy: a fear that printing, by cheapening books, was crippling a textual culture that generations had cherished, promoting careless reading in its place. We need not accept their evaluation of the change to believe it was happening. Critiquing the "butterfly-bound" codex form that printing had made dominant (as opposed to the older book-scroll), Ssu-ma Kuang complained that readers could now skip around in a book without reading it through.¹⁰⁴ The same format let them hold passages with bookmarks, or use a table of contents to head straight to a chosen section. All this devalued memory, by making important passages findable without knowledge of the whole book. Others complained that students now took books for granted: Su Shih thought them less likely to fix their minds on study, now that books were there whenever they wanted them, than when one had to hunt books down.¹⁰⁵ Ch'ao I-tao (1059–1129) thought that printing made young men uncritical readers: when every scholar had needed to collate varying manuscripts and check his own for copying errors, all knew to approach what was written critically. Now that one student's book was the same as another's, the warning signal of textual variation was lost, and students assumed that anything in a book was the correct text.¹⁰⁶ Yeh Meng-te (1077–1148) thus argued, not

¹⁰² See *Ming-kung shu-p'an qing-ming chi*, pp. 481 and 482 for two pettifoggers who are clerks' sons.

¹⁰³ Susan Cherniack, "Book culture and textual transmission in Sung China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54 No. 1 (1994), pp. 5–125; Stuart H. Sargent, "Contexts of the song lyric in Sung times: Communication technology, social change, morality," in *Voices of the song lyric in China*, ed. Pauline Yu (California, 1994), pp. 226–56. The discussion that follows is heavily indebted to Cherniack and Sargent. On similar issues, see Egan, "To count grains of sand."

¹⁰⁴ Chang Lei, *Ming-tao tsa-chih (Hsiieh-bai lei-pien ed.)* 14a, cited in Cherniack, "Book culture and textual transmission in Sung China," p. 39 n. 77.

¹⁰⁵ Cited in Cherniack, "Book culture and textual transmission in Sung China," p. 47 n. 101. Of course one might still have to hunt books down, as McDermott has shown.

¹⁰⁶ Colophon quoted in Chou Tzu-chih, *Ch'u-p'o lao-jen shih-hua* (Pai-ch'uan hsueh-hai ed. 1930), cited in Cherniack, "Book culture and textual transmission in Sung China," p. 47 n. 102.

completely implausibly, that **printing had worsened textual transmission by propagating errors**. Yeh, like Ssu-ma, also complained of the **loss of memory skills** among students of his day. (The complexity of both reality and perceptions, however, is clear from the persistent complaints of the same period that examinations rewarded memory at the expense of understanding.¹⁰⁷) Some of the complaints remind one of present fears about the learning habits that the Internet promotes; and as with these, one need not take Sung complaints as snapshots of reality to believe that **attitudes toward books, knowledge, and study were changing, and that observers saw the changes, however partially**.

The great Neo-Confucian consolidator Chu Hsi consolidated these complaints too, into a set of **prescriptions to counter the habits that printed books fostered**. Chu himself both **made money and spread his ideas through his printing activity**, so we cannot imagine him as printing's opponent.¹⁰⁸ But as leader of a movement that fought the degenerative trends it saw in its time, Chu cherished a **reading model he traced to antiquity**. As Cherniack notes, "Chu's recommendations . . . read less but more slowly, repeatedly, and with greater concentration, **one book at a time; vocalize the text** when reading [this importantly implies that **silent reading was common**¹⁰⁹]; learn to **recite books from memory** – reflect his understanding of the ethics of reading in preprint times."¹¹⁰ Chu targeted faults that he and many Sung teachers saw as **effects of print**: "book greed (the desire to gobble down as many books as possible), **speed-reading, superficial reading, jumping around in books**," and so on.¹¹¹ Unless we think these intellectuals very poor observers, we must suppose that the new reading modes they disdained really existed in their time. **The appeal to a preprint model focused on manuscript and oral learning (memorizing by reciting, reciting in company, and so on) may look like romantic reaction, but it is a reaction against something.**¹¹²

Sargent makes bold proposals about print's impact on poetic culture and especially the *tz'u* or song lyric, which first flourished in late T'ang and Sung. Sargent argues that **the use of print from early in the dynasty, especially by the**

¹⁰⁷ Ssu-ma himself criticized the emphasis on memorization in medical examinations: "At present we test [only knowledge of] the *Canon of problems* and the *Basic questions*. Thus we get only memorizers; by no means do we get doctors." See Ssu-ma Kuang, *Ssu-ma wen-kung wen-chi* (SPPY ed.), 4:8b–9b, and see Hymes, "Not quite gentlemen?", p. 42, for a fuller quotation of the passage.

¹⁰⁸ See Wing-tsit Chan, *Chu Hsi: New studies* (Honolulu, 1989), pp. 77–81, for a different take on the same facts.

¹⁰⁹ The first recorded silent reader in China is Juan Tan (281–310). See, for instance, Barrett, *The woman who discovered printing*, p. 36.

¹¹⁰ Cherniack, "Book culture and textual transmission in Sung China," p. 51.

¹¹¹ Cherniack, "Book culture and textual transmission in Sung China," p. 50.

¹¹² On Chu Hsi's recommendations for reading, see also Daniel Gardner, "Transmitting the Way: Chu Hsi and his program of learning," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 49 No. 1 (June 1989), pp. 141–72.

state, to propagate standard versions of canonical texts gave literate Sung people confidence that the basics of culture were reliably preserved, and that such confidence promoted a de-emphasis of shared tradition and an emphasis on individual feeling. This is a large claim, but if alongside “individual feeling” we set individual *character* or *achievement*, we will see parallels to the shift Peter Bol finds from early T’ang to Southern Sung in gentlemen’s view of themselves, from collective bearers of cultural tradition to individual apprehenders of moral truth; or to the shift in literati painting, beginning in Northern Sung, away from acquired craft (especially skill in representation) and toward individual self-expression. Second, Sargent argues more specifically that the flowering of both the song lyric and prose writing alongside the older *shih* poetry owed much to printing, because lyrics, through metrical irregularity, and prose, through lacking meter, are harder to memorize than *shih* poems and thus depend on access to texts. A corollary is his third thesis: that the increasing refinement and complexity of the meter and tonal prosody of lyrics reflect the same capacity of printing to propagate cultural forms that are hard to memorize.¹¹³ These, of course, are Sargent’s proposals, not yet the field’s findings, because work on the cultural impact of print has only begun; Cherniack and Sargent each suggest some of the directions to look. Superficially, Sargent’s claim that elites felt new security in the preservation of the cultural heritage may seem to contradict Cherniack’s finding of anxiety over textual transmission and textual use. But this is deceptive: Sung gentlemen did not all think alike. Scholars’ charges that students over-trust printed texts are certainly expressions of anxiety over proper textual transmission; but they are also, precisely, testimony that many others in their time assume that the written heritage is safe.

Outside the sphere of sheer text, Hilde De Weerd has recently shown the importance of printed maps of the Sung empire, circulated in atlases and recycled in encyclopedias, in making knowledge of the shape of the Chinese empire past and present available to a literate public. Printers of maps in book form aimed first of all at practical availability and usability; the first printed atlas that survives contained nineteen lengthy instructions on how its maps should be read. Maps’ availability enabled not only relatively informed discussion of geopolitical events and crises, but in Southern Sung also a bitterly nostalgic image of the empire as it had been before the Chin conquest of North China or even before the Liao seizure of the “sixteen prefectures” at what had once been the northernmost extent of the T’ang empire. Images of the gentleman sitting despondently or angrily at his desk perusing an empire map became common property for poets of the day. Here printing affected

¹¹³ Stuart Sargent, “Contexts of the song lyric in Sung times.” For the three theses cited, see pp. 249–53.

not only ways of reading but **ways of seeing and imagining the world** as well.¹¹⁴

Finally we should step back and examine the argument so far: that books' availability – the real source of the changes traced here – was an effect of printing. Certainly this is part of the story, but books' availability was also enabled by *commerce*, by the new reach of the market. Printing, through speed and low production costs, lent itself to commerce more powerfully than hand-copying could, but commerce made many things more easily available, not just books. We should look again at anxieties about printed books and see that they are anxieties about **too easy access: anxieties about the effects of the market, not just about print**. The market cheapened. But the market was suspect for another reason: **it mediated competitive self-seeking and material striving**. These were hardly taboo as some have thought, but they stirred ambivalence, and critique, in China as elsewhere, in the Sung as now.

Chu Hsi's emphasis on slow, careful absorption of texts for their own sake reacted against sloppy reading, but also against reading for the wrong reasons. **Stephen West** has pointed to two fascinating texts in an encyclopedia of daily life, the *Shih-lin kuang-chi*, a collection of texts of wide variety, mostly **aids for everyday problems**: how to make soap, how to physiognomize a horse for betting purposes, and so on. Two of these offered charts to guide readers through life quantitatively. One, "Alerting the world" (Figure 2), drew life as a passage over a bridge, with bridge sections marked out as stages of life, appropriate admonitions for each stage, and the years drawn as an array of small circles like checkboxes along the span, to fill in at the end of each year while noting the special duties of that stage and the approaching one. The ledger-like spirit hinted at here blossoms in the "Chart for making the most of your days" (see Figure 3), a fully quantified schedule for examination study. The chart pictures the testing hall as the top of a stairway of study, built of the days and months of the three-year period between examinations. Each stair's riser comprises three rows of ten daily checkboxes each, forming one month. Thirty-six stairs (months) bring the reader to the sea in which the examination hall sits like one of the holy islands of legend. The author explicates the chart at length, but a sample will suffice here.

[I] have drawn a staircase of steps to order the progress of the days. There are 1080 days in the count, and if for now one sets aside eighty days for relaxation, rest, and seeing to [other] needs, then in the remaining thousand days one can complete texts for the examinations,

¹¹⁴ Hilde De Weerd, "Maps and memory: Readings of cartography in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Song China," *Imago mundi* 61 No. 2 (2009), pp. 145–67. See also her "The cultural logics of map reading: Text, time, and space in printed maps of the Song empire," in *Knowledge and text production in an age of print: China, 900–1400*, ed. Lucille Chia and Hilde De Weerd (Leiden, 2011), pp. 145–67.

should be kept at hand. Each day fill in one box, and as the days go by, the filled part gets larger and the empty part smaller . . . ¹¹⁵

The author urges the student to compile logbooks, each a month long, noting the title of each text read and the starting and ending points; each poem memorized; and the full text of each of his own poems, discourses, and policy essays. Quantity is all; each passage of a given length is assumed to need the same time and effort; and the pace never varies. The checkbox-and-logbook approach must owe much to bookkeeping methods arising in commercial life. Yet it is also a secular careerist version of the Sung religious registers of conduct (see the religion section), or even the registers of good and ill deeds that Chu Hsi expected his community compact to keep collectively. Rigorous daily noting of routine acts for counting and cumulative valuation jumped from arena to arena of Sung life as literacy spread and as commerce and money promoted familiarity with numbers. Notice that the “Chart for making the most of your days” assumes that each text is available at its appointed moment, an assumption that we have seen some blamed on printing. One can imagine its audience to include both gentlemanly elites and the new literate occupations. The difference from Chu Hsi’s reading model is stark, yet the text explicates Chu’s model by showing us one context against which he asserted it. We need not wonder what Chu would have made of it, because although he died before the encyclopedia was compiled, the two charts circulated in his time, and he commented on them in conversation: “The two charts ‘Alerting the world’ and ‘Making the most of your days’ are fake (*wei*).”¹¹⁶ The choice of words is interesting. Since the two charts do not represent themselves as anything they were not or as the work of someone not their author, we have to read “fake” here in the broader sense it often held in Sung debate, referring to forms of learning that are both false and reprehensible. It was one of the strongest words of condemnation a scholar like Chu could offer. This denunciation of an anonymous huckster to examination strivers by a teacher of the Learning of the Way is at the same time a confrontation between two of the new social and cultural strands that textual commerce had fostered.

¹¹⁵ *Shih-lin kuang-chi* (1325 ed.; Peking, 1999), Part 2, 1, pp. 23–4; cited in Stephen West, “*Tu* 圖 good to be true: Finding your way through life and learning in the Song and the Yüan,” paper presented at the conference on Discourses and Practices of Everyday Life in Imperial China, Columbia University, October 27, 2002, p. 3. The earliest surviving editions of the *Shih-lin kuang-chi* date from the Yüan. West has more recently explored the “Chart for making the most of your days” in a broader study, “Time management and self-control: Self-help guides in Yüan,” in *Text, performance, and gender in Chinese literature and music: Essays in honor of Wilt Idema*, ed. Maghiel van Crevel, Tian Yüan Tan, and Michel Hockx (Leiden and Boston, 2009), pp. 113–38.

¹¹⁶ Chu Hsi, *Chu-tzu yü-lei*, cited in Stephen West, “Self-reliance in study and in life: *Shilin guangji* in the Southern Song,” paper presented at the conference on Discourses and Practices of Everyday Life in Imperial China, Columbia University, October 27, 2002, p. 3.

One should not leave printing behind without mentioning three more products of the woodblock, crucially important for Sung economy and society but not usually considered under this heading. Thomas Lee may be the only writer on Sung printing to point out that entirely apart from books, block printing was the method of production of both paper money and monk certificates.¹¹⁷ the former a crucial medium of commerce from middle Northern Sung on, the latter both (as we have seen) an important form of money in itself and (as we shall see) a catalyst of religious change. With as many as 100 million notes of paper money in circulation by 1208 and an annual issue quota of 400,000 ordination certificates set as early as 1074, these must have been among the pieces of printed paper most often seen by an ordinary man or woman of the Sung. It is possible they took second place, though, to the religious paper money burned to gods (and of course sold in markets for the purpose), in virtually universal use in Southern Sung and arguably even more important for Sung religious life than ordination certificates. Susan Shih-shan Huang speculates plausibly, given the quantities often involved, that religious paper money too was supplied by print shops.¹¹⁸ If so, printing, commerce, and religion came together here in a single humble artifact.

WOMEN AND GENDER

Sung discourses and practices surrounding women often find or create new kinds of difference from men.¹¹⁹ How do we explain this? Serious research on Sung women and gender is relatively recent; this section will draw freely on scholars' findings that are still tentative, and offer explanations, partly drawn from existing work and partly new, that are even more so. We may begin with three examples of new or emphasized difference.

¹¹⁷ Lee, "Books and bookworms," pp. 197–9.

¹¹⁸ Shih-shan Susan Huang, *Picturing the true form: Daoist visual culture in traditional China* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), p. 239.

¹¹⁹ My thinking on gender in the Sung has been influenced heavily by the work of Birge, Bossler, Ebrey, and Furth cited below, but also strongly by the work of Christian de Pee, beginning with his dissertation, "Negotiating marriage: Weddings, text, and ritual in Song and Yuan dynasty China, 10th through 14th centuries" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1997); and his "The ritual and sexual meanings of the groom and the bride in ritual manuals of the Sung dynasty (eleventh through thirteenth centuries)," in *Chinese women in the imperial past: New perspectives*, ed. Harriet Zurndorfer (Leiden, 1999), pp. 53–100; and continuing through his book *The writing of weddings in imperial China: Text and ritual practice in the eighth through fourteenth centuries* (Albany, 2007). For other important work, see Yüan Li, "Sung-tai nü-hsing ts'ai-ch'an-ch'üan shu-lun," in *Chung-kuo fu-nü shih lun chi, hsu-chi*, ed. Pao Chia-lin (Taipei, 1990), pp. 173–211; Lau Nap Yin (Liu Li-yen), "Ch'ien-t'an Sung-tai fu-nü te shou-chieh yü tsai-chia, *Hsin shih hsueh* 2 No. 4 (1991), pp. 37–77; Gudula Linck, "Aus der fruchtbaren Erde wie einsame Schatten: Zum Wandel der Wahrnehmung von Weiblichkeit bei der chinesischen Oberschicht der Sung-Zeit," in *Lebenswelt und Weltanschauung im frühneuzeitlichen China* (Stuttgart, 1990), pp. 190–222.

Three new differences

Surely the most widely known gender-related innovation of the Sung is **footbinding**. Here difference was not simply emphasized or imagined but wrought, on a part of the **body** not otherwise different in women than in men. More important, it was a part that Chinese had not long *imagined* different in women, though admiration of small feet in women is detectable from the ninth century at the latest.¹²⁰ **Patricia Ebrey has shown the gradual spread of footbinding from origins probably in the period of disunion after the Tang.**¹²¹ In the three hundred years of the Sung it became widespread enough among elite women to motivate **written speculation on its origins, criticism of it as pointless cruelty, and celebration of the superiority of Sung women's feet to those of previous dynasties.**¹²² **Contrary to modern critics, there is no hint that footbinding was promoted by Neo-Confucian ideas, which frowned on the pursuit of beauty or sensuality for themselves and offered no basis for a custom with little other point.**

Thought by appreciators to make a woman's feet and stance more graceful, footbinding began among dancers and other entertainers, and Ebrey plausibly suggests that **its spread to women of quite different status reflected the competitive efforts by elite wives, and the women who raised them, to emulate a male-favored ideal first dominant among courtesans, women of the entertainment quarters that flourished in the commercial cities of the Sung; and that the custom entered elite families when men brought courtesans home as concubines.** Concubines were bought and sold – though often for limited terms more resembling **indenture than slavery** – in an open commercial market that was simply one more of the many markets of the Sung urban world; and Ebrey argues that **concubinage became more common as commerce spawned new wealth and as more men found themselves able to resort to these markets.**¹²³ Beverly Bossler's more recent work on courtesans fills out this picture, showing that the **boundaries between independent courtesan, household courtesan, and concubine, and among the different varieties and levels of each, grew increasingly blurry with time,**¹²⁴ as the market developed courtesan-like specialties in poor girls whose parents raised them for servitude or concubinage

¹²⁰ On this point, illustrated with a ninth-century Cinderella folktale and late T'ang poems, see Dorothy Ko, *Every step a lotus: Shoes for bound feet* (Berkeley, 2001), pp. 25–35.

¹²¹ Patricia Ebrey, *The inner quarters: Marriage and the lives of Chinese women in the Sung period* (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 37–43.

¹²² For examples of all three sorts of comment, from Chang Pang-chi, Chang Tun, and Ch'en Jo-shui respectively, see Ebrey, *The inner quarters*, pp. 38–9.

¹²³ Ebrey, *The inner quarters*, pp. 217–18.

¹²⁴ Beverly Bossler, "Shifting identities: Courtesans and literati in Sung China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 62 No. 1 (Jun 2002), pp. 5–37. This article must now be seen as superseded by Bossler's

from the start, as we learn in a famous passage from the late Sung author Liao Ying-chung:

Middle and lower households in the capital do not put great emphasis on producing sons; but they love and protect every daughter they raise, as if clutching a pearl or a jade. When she gets a bit older, they teach her an art or occupation in keeping with her looks and character, so as to prepare her to be chosen by a gentleman (*shih-ta-fu*) as a pleasure attendant. The names and categories vary: there are what are called personal attendants, helpers, waitresses, seamstresses, persons of the front of the hall, comedy singers, laundresses, zither girls, chess-playing girls, cooking maids, and so on.¹²⁵

In this world, a gentleman need not make a professional courtesan his concubine to bring a courtesan's ways into his household. This makes it still more plausible that, by successive steps of competitive emulation, footbinding might spread from professional entertainers to respectable wives, and all of this was facilitated by markets both in professional female entertainment and in girls raised for elite household service.

A second example comes from a quite different place in Sung culture: the world of scholarly medicine. Charlotte Furth has shown the rise of "women's medicine" (*fu-k'o*) as a specialty for male doctors in the Sung.¹²⁶ In her words, "In the Sung dynasty medical thought appeared more concerned with female difference than either earlier or later in Chinese history"; in those of Ch'i Chung-fu, professor in the Sung Grand Medical Office, "For the first time there is specialized knowledge concerning the women's chambers. Surely it

much more extensive work on courtesans, concubines, faithful widows and much else in her *Courtesans, concubines, and the cult of female fidelity* (Cambridge, MA, 2013). I read the book as this chapter was approaching final sendoff to the press and have not been able to make extensive use of it. I do not think the new arguments Bossler makes in the book vitiate the uses I have made of her previous work here; but she unites her several topics into an arc that attempts unified explanation of a number of features of Sung gender relations that might have been considered unrelated previously – in particular the rise of the fidelity cult around wives and widows on the one hand and the concubine–courtesan complex on the other; and if I were able to rewrite this section extensively I would attempt to integrate her findings fully into my own picture of things. The book must be read by anyone seriously interested in Sung gender relations. Where I think, based on the book, that she would now take a different position than one I have ascribed to her in this chapter, I have noted it.

¹²⁵ Liao Ying-chung, *Chiang-hsing tsa-chi* (*Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* ed.), 5, cited in Ebrey, "Concubines in Sung China," *Journal of Family History* 11 No. 1 (1986), p. 8; and in Bossler, "Shifting identities," specific citation on p. 26. The passage was reproduced in the Ch'ing dynasty miscellany compiled by P'an Yung-yin, *Sung pai lei ch'ao* (Taipei, 1966), 7, pp. 88b–90a, and is quoted from that source in Ch'üan Han-sheng, "Sung-tai nü-tzu chih-yeh yü sheng-chi," in *Chung-kuo fu-nü shih lun chi*, ed. Pao Chia-lin (Taipei, 1990), pp. 197–8. Ch'üan's article originally appeared in *Shih-huo pan-yüeh k'an* 1:9 (April 1, 1934), pp. 5–10. My translation diverges only slightly from Ebrey's or Bossler's.

¹²⁶ Charlotte Furth, *A flourishing yin: Gender in China's medical history, 960–1665* (Berkeley, 1999), especially pp. 59–133.

should not fail to be written in books?"¹²⁷ The new science began by identifying blood – especially menstrual blood – as central to female, and not male, medical patterns. An older medical model dating back to the Han conceived human bodies theoretically as androgynous, with male–female differences produced not by essential dissimilarity but by differing proportions of the *yin* and *yang* elements present in both – owning even occasional shifting or mixture across what was thought a relatively fluid boundary.¹²⁸ In this model similar movements of *ch'i*, or psychophysical substance, in boys and girls at the successive stages of life produced outcomes (the changes of puberty and so on) that differed but were seen as parallel.¹²⁹ Sung writers did not discard this model, still seeing blood, obviously present in all bodies, as the *yin* form of *ch'i*. But the new emphasis on blood and menses yielded a qualitative difference at the functional level. In Furth's words, "when doctors theorized that 'in women blood is the leader,' in fact they produced gender difference."¹³⁰ In this they drew upon a T'ang physician, Sun Ssu-miao, who in his *Prescriptions worth a thousand* had painted a hair-raising picture of the medical dangers built into women:

The Classic says: women are a gathering place for *yin* influences, dwelling in dampness. From the age of fourteen, their *yin* [*ch'i*] wells up and a hundred thoughts run through their minds, damaging their organ systems within and ruining their beauty without. Their monthly courses flow out or are kept within, now early, now late, stagnating and congesting blood and interrupting the functions of central pathways. The injuries from this cannot be enumerated in words. Internal organs are now cold, now hot, now replete, now depleted. Bad blood inside leaks out, and energy channels are used up and drained. Sometimes immoderate diet causes damage, sometimes they have sexual intercourse before their [vaginal] itching sores have healed. Sometimes as they relieve themselves at the privy above, wind enters from below, causing the twelve chronic illnesses. All this is why women have separate prescriptions . . . For miscellaneous disorders that are alike in women and men, one should consult the main chapters of this work. But females' longings and desires are more intense than those of their husbands, and they are more often stimulated to become ill. Add to this that in women envy and dislike, compassion and love, grief and sorrow, attachments and aversions are all especially stubborn and deep-seated. They cannot control these emotions themselves, and thus the roots of their illnesses are deep, and their cure difficult.¹³¹

¹²⁷ Furth, *A flourishing yin*, pp. 60–1 and 69 respectively. My translation follows Furth. Ch'i's words appear in his 1220 preface to his own *One hundred questions on medicine for females* (*Nü k'o pai wen*) of the same year (facsimile reprint of the Tsung-pu-t'ang ed. of 1735; Shanghai, 1983.)

¹²⁸ Furth, *A flourishing yin*, pp. 19–58.

¹²⁹ Furth, *A flourishing yin*, p. 45. ¹³⁰ Furth, *A flourishing yin*, p. 91.

¹³¹ Sun Ssu-miao, *Pei-chi ch'ien-chin yao-fang* (Peking, 1955 and 1994) 2, p. 16, cited in Furth, pp. 71–2; my translation follows Furth's closely.

Sun was a T'ang man, but his account became canonical only in the Sung, grounding the emerging field.¹³² Especially important is his **image of women as vulnerable in ways men are not**. Sun Ssu-miao owns many ailments as common to the sexes. Yet Sung *fu-k'o* specialists could attribute even **the same illness to different causes in men and women**; and as Furth notes, no specialty in "men's medicine" (*nan-k'o*) arose — **no balancing male vulnerabilities were identified, theorized, and taken into practice, though to do so would have multiplied professional opportunities**.¹³³ **If footbinding, in making women (in Sung eyes) more graceful, also made them less mobile and less fit (as Ebrey argues),¹³⁴ *fu-k'o* specialists defined them a priori as vulnerable and weaker beings.**



A third example was not a new phenomenon but was a newly acute concern. Ebrey discusses **the ideal of male–female separation** — confinement of women to the home, and even there to its "inner quarters," leaving men free (or obliged) to travel in and deal with the outside world. From paintings and other evidence she largely concludes that **the separation was effective in elite households, much less so beyond the elite**.¹³⁵ The painted evidence is problematic, since **one does not know whether painters who show segregated sexes are depicting social reality or celebrating an ideal; other media show contrary evidence**.¹³⁶ In 1045 Mei Yao-ch'en sang his longing for his dead wife in a poem entitled *On the night of the fifteenth day of the first month I go*

¹³² See Furth, *A flourishing yin*, p. 72 n. 29 for some examples of citations.

¹³³ See Furth, *A flourishing yin*, p. 81, on the example of "bone-steaming."

¹³⁴ The effect of footbinding on female mobility and fitness is a complicated question, and I do not stake anything on it. That footbinding eventually became a crippling or hobbling procedure is clear. In late imperial times, as the custom spread beyond the elite and even peasant women adopted it, it seems to have been consistent with a surprisingly high degree of physical activity, sometimes even in the fields; yet abundant testimony from the last two or three centuries tells us that footbound women had difficulty walking compared to their unbound neighbors. But Sung footbinding seems to have performed a different operation upon the foot, bending the toes up, not down; and while the object was already (in part) to make the foot small, the fact that it could (at least early on) be undertaken with profit by professional dancers makes one wonder how crippling it was in comparison to later versions. The toe shoes of modern ballet dancers wreak injury of various kinds upon the health of their feet, yet they have no trouble getting around, let alone maintaining fitness. For the later form Dorothy Ko offers a balanced judgment: "A woman with bound feet walked with a shuffling gait. Her hip and thigh muscles, which propelled her motion, grew strong. Her lower leg between the knee and the ankle, however, atrophied from lack of use." See Ko, *Every step a lotus*, p. 60.

¹³⁵ Ebrey's conclusions are somewhat ambiguous or equivocal, understandably given the state of the evidence. She cautions against imagining "two separate and unrelated sets of standards," one among the elite and one among non-elites, and notes that older commoner women may have held to gender separation more than younger. The caution is appropriate because so much of the evidence available can be read as prescription, or as implicit critical commentary of a reality that does not live up to its expectations, rather than as description.

¹³⁶ Cf. Robert P. Hymes, review of Patricia Ebrey, *The inner quarters*, in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 57 No. 1 (June 1997), pp. 234–7.

out and return. His first stanza gives us a picture far from the segregated ideal:

Only depression if I stay at home:
Out to the festival to ease my pain.
But every man, rich or poor, is together with his wife;
My heart is moved only to greater grief.¹³⁷

Mei specifies that both rich and poor wives are at the festival, and goes on to tell us that a year ago his own wife brought their children there: "Last year their mother took them out; / They smeared on rouge, trying to be just like her."¹³⁸ Ebrey finds complexity in her evidence too, noting that when epitaphs praise some elite women for choosing to stay home instead of going out with their husbands, they imply that others chose differently; the opportunities they are refusing would not exist in a context of uniform confinement even for elite wives. The issue needs a systematic study of all relevant evidence across the Sung, which in a broad multi-topic inquiry Ebrey could not attempt. It is broadly plausible that seclusion of elite women drew nearer the ideal in Southern than in Northern Sung. Ebrey's epitaphs praising women for staying home are concentrated in Northern Sung, for example, and in the way she reads them this would suggest that staying home was less remarkable in Southern Sung. But this is scattered evidence, read against its literal grain. A full study might find such change over time but would find exceptions. In his thirteenth-century celebration of the capital, Hang-chou, *Meng-liang lu*, Wu Tzu-mu tells of the "Gathering on Gengsheng Day," held yearly in the prominent T'ien-chu Buddhist temple in that city, which was public enough for people of the city to joke about it as a "Gathering for Competition over Jewelry," a chance for the ladies of court rank or wealth who attended the festival to show off their finery in public.¹³⁹ When the Southern Sung poet Lu Yu famously met again his divorced first wife, it was at a garden to which she had come with

¹³⁷ My translation follows Jonathan Chaves, *Mei Yao-ch'en and the development of early Sung poetry* (New York, 1976), p. 149. The poem itself is in Mei Yao-ch'en, *Wan-ling chi* (*Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an* ed.), 11, p. 14a-b. It is possible to quibble with Chaves's translation of the third line: "every man, rich or poor, is together with his wife." The Chinese is *kuei chien i ch'ou-p'i*, and standard dictionaries do not mention husband-wife pairs in glossing either this phrase or its homonym and near synonym *ch'ou-p'i*: instead the glosses would suggest "every man, rich or poor, is with a companion." The further text of the poem, however, makes clear that the wife had gone out with the children to the same festival the year before, which establishes the crucial point of women's public outings; and both this continuation and the "My heart is moved only to greater grief" line that immediately follows the questionable one persuade me that Chaves is right, as in the context of a poem of mourning for a wife the sight of male companions paired off would not justify grief.

¹³⁸ Chaves, *Mei Yao-ch'en*, p. 150.

¹³⁹ Wu Tzu-mu, *Meng-liang lu* (*Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* ed.), 19, p. 180. I owe the reference to Shih-shan Susan Huang, in her "Tianzhu Lingqian," p. 250.

her new husband, and the record tells us that their visit was one of many conjugal outings in the countryside.¹⁴⁰ This behavior would apparently have been scandalous in the eighteenth century when Shen Fu wrote *Six records of a floating life* and told of disguising his wife as a man so that she could take an outing with him.¹⁴¹ Even Southern Sung women were not yet living in that late imperial world.

What we can say instead is that the issue of women's confinement was increasingly salient in the Sung, perhaps all the more as many women did not act as social commentators felt they should. As Ebrey points out, authors who differed as much as Ssu-ma Kuang, Yüan Ts'ai (1140–95), and Chu Hsi all agreed on the need for sexual separation and female confinement.¹⁴² Yüan Ts'ai, who often starts wherever current social practice happens to be and reasons from there – contrary to Ssu-ma or Chu, for example, he assumed that most widows simply would remarry – called Ssu-ma's advice on separation “more than half of what is needed to manage a household,”¹⁴³ and we will see that Chu Hsi outlined virtually a full plan for the life a competent, educated woman might live without leaving the home. It is at the level of concern and exhortation, rather than fully in practice, that we can see here a third example of what Ebrey has called “a trend toward making the sexes more distinct.”¹⁴⁴

The other two new tendencies may each find separate partial explanations. As to socioeconomic mechanisms, Ebrey's emulative diffusion of footbinding from the courtesan–concubine world to respectable wives is plausible, and roots the change in the growing Sung commerce in personal services and persons, explaining why it happened when it did. But it does not tell us why in the first place small feet were so attractive to growing circles of Sung men. Dorothy Ko traces the ideal to ninth-century folklore and poetry, getting at its origins, but we need to explain its persuasiveness to increasing numbers of men and women thereafter.¹⁴⁵ Surely many cultural strands in the ninth-century

¹⁴⁰ Chou Mi, *Ch'i-tung yeh yü* (Peking, 1983), pp. 17–18. See also Michael Duke, *Lu You* (Boston, 1977), pp. 23–5, and Burton Watson, *The old man who does as he pleases: Selections from the poetry and prose of Lu Yu* (New York, 1973), pp. 26–7, for translations of Chou Mi's account (Duke) and of relevant poems (Duke and Watson).

¹⁴¹ Shen Fu, *Six records of a floating life*, trans. Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui (London, 1983), pp. 44–5.

¹⁴² Ebrey, *The inner quarters*, p. 24.

¹⁴³ Yüan Ts'ai, *Yüan-shih shih-fan* (*Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* ed.), 3, p. 49 (item 20), cited in Ebrey, *The inner quarters*, p. 24; and see Patricia Buckley Ebrey, trans., *Family and property in Sung China: Yüan Ts'ai's Precepts for social life* (Princeton, 1984), p. 286.

¹⁴⁴ Ebrey, *The inner quarters*, p. 37. The range of physical spaces available to Sung women, and of spaces they created, is the broad topic of a recent important dissertation by my student Xu Man: “Places and objects: Interpreting women's space in Fujian during the Song dynasty (960–1279)” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2010).

¹⁴⁵ Ko, *Every step a lotus*, pp. 25–35.

literary and folkloric worlds did not bear fruit in major social change in the following three centuries: our problem is reception. Ebrey suggests that Sung men themselves had changed, and thus needed a change in women to preserve difference: “Because the ideal upper-class man was by Sung times a relatively subdued and refined figure, he might seem effeminate unless women could be made even more delicate, reticent, and stationary.” Ebrey is suggesting that seizing on the new ideal was a cultural response to a threat – the threat of sameness. It appears she intends this explanation to account for the softness and slightheadedness of Sung women in paintings as well – and it is the only attempt at systematic explanation of that phenomenon I am aware of. There is much to Ebrey’s suggestion, but it is worth considering certain other phenomena before returning to it.



Furth places the new science of women’s medicine in the context of the Northern Sung rise of male, literate, state physicians who, in treating palace women, moved onto turf once owned and still claimed by female healers, spirit mediums, and others whose practice might not rest on texts. Defining women’s illness as a distinct field, built around canonized theory and above written prescriptions, supported these men’s move into new professional territory.¹⁴⁶ Again this makes sense as socioeconomic mechanism, and fits with what we have seen of rising, literate, not quite gentlemanly medical practitioners with new access to wealth and books, but it does not fully explain the new field’s content. Granted that practitioners needed female difference to justify their profession, why did difference need to consist in greater vulnerability? Furth’s answer may be that the focus on vulnerability emerges from the Neo-Confucian familism that worked to confine women within a protective – and protectively closed – household sphere.¹⁴⁷ Again there is something to this, but it is worth exploring the possibility that the new medicine and Learning of the Way “familism” as it concerned women are separate but parallel reactions to a single range of new developments in their time.

Women’s vulnerability

Vulnerability recurs often in Sung elite men’s comments on women, even when the matters they remark on could, to another eye, have quite other readings. Let us look at several examples and then consider an opposite view of each. Yüan Ts’ai, in his household manual of 1178, offers this pessimistic view of the economic plight of wives:

¹⁴⁶ Furth, *A flourishing yin*, p. 132.

¹⁴⁷ Furth, *A flourishing yin*, p. 131 – but I am not sure I am reading her correctly in finding here her explanation of the construction of female vulnerability.

The rule that “women do not take part in outside business” means to say that so long as their husbands and sons are worthy, outside business is something they need not take part in. If the husband and son are no good, and hide things from the woman’s eyes and ears, then there is no end to what may happen. Men today often indulge in play and gambling, going so far as to sell their lands or even their homes with the wife unaware. Thus if her husband is unworthy, even if she wants to take part in outside business what good will it do? A son’s property sale must be by agreement with his mother, but some make fake contracts and forge her signature. They borrow money at high interest, and the [lender] has no qualms about taking them to court over it. They borrow tea and salt to trade for goods, and [when this is found out] the authorities hold them responsible to pay compensation for it. The mother can never control this. Thus if her son is unworthy, even if she tries to take part in outside business what good will it do? This is a woman’s grave misfortune, but what can she do? Wouldn’t it be excellent if husbands and sons would remember their wives’ and mothers’ pitiable state and at once reform?¹⁴⁸

Yüan’s second example here is of the woman already widowed, thus dependent on her son. In his next item Yüan takes up widows again, drawing a slightly less pessimistic picture, but still treats less dire cases as exceptional:

Some wives are able, when their husbands are stupid or lazy, to manage the family’s affairs themselves, calculating the income and expenditures of money and grain, and people can’t cheat them. Some whose husbands are no good are able to manage the family’s affairs together with their sons, without causing the ruin of the family and the loss of its property. Some whose husbands are dead and children are young are able to raise and instruct their children, maintain harmony with their in-laws and own kin, manage the family’s affairs, and even raise it to prosperity. All these are wise women. But to manage a living when the husband is dead and the children are young is the hardest thing of all. For if she relies on her own kin, they are not necessarily worthy; if she relies on her in-laws, they are not necessarily worthy; and those who are worthy are not necessarily willing to get involved in another person’s affairs. Only wives who themselves know how to write and figure, and whose relatives have enough food and clothing for themselves and some awareness of fairness and duty, may come close to doing it. Otherwise it is rare that it does not ruin the family.¹⁴⁹

The focus on dependence on others that we see here recurs in a later item:

For women who live a long life, old age is especially hard to bear, because most women must rely on others for their existence. Of her relatives from before she was married, a good father is of even more value than a good grandfather; a good brother is of even more value than a good father; and a good nephew is even more valuable than a good brother. Of the relatives she acquires through marriage, a good husband is even more valuable than a good father-in-law; a good son is even more valuable than a good husband; and a good

¹⁴⁸ Yüan Ts’ai, *Yüan-shih shih-fan*, 1, p. 18 (item 52). My translation largely follows Ebrey, *Family and property*, p. 220.

¹⁴⁹ Yüan Ts’ai, *Yüan-shih shih-fan*, 1, p. 18 (item 53). See also Ebrey, *Family and property*, p. 221.

grandson is even more valuable than a good son. Women often enjoy health and honor in their youth but find their old age difficult because of this principle.¹⁵⁰

Yüan's woman is dependent, vulnerable to others' malfeasance or incompetence, and able to act for herself only if unusually talented; all the more as she ages and perhaps most of all in widowhood.

Consider some other examples. Ebrey, examining women's work, cites several Sung poems on women who spin or weave to make money for their families. As she notes, the poems never hint that such work brought greater autonomy, or even importance in the household, despite the new opportunities for income that Sung textile markets offered; instead they stress suffering, and sometimes blame the state whose taxes forced women to work. Hsü Chi (1028–1103) seems to blame the rapacious market that does not even allow the weaver to wear what she weaves:

It is not that her body does not like clothes of silk gauze.
When the moon is bright, through frost and cold, she never
leaves the loom.
Even when it is woven into gauze, she does not wear it.
She sells it for cash to buy silk yarn to take back.¹⁵¹

Hsü's contemporary Wen T'ung (1018–79) imagined a girl whose cloth had been rejected by the tax collectors:

Her tears flow as though from a leaking drain.
To get some cash she takes off clothes to pawn
And buys yarn to fasten to the loom.
She does not dare leave the loom
Through the night, after the fire and candle are out.
She has to finish the tax cloth.¹⁵²

Both poets show women resorting to the market to pawn, sell, or buy. (The first, with its "to take back," suggests she goes to market herself.) The point will be worth returning to. But for Hsü and Wen the interest of such scenes lies in women's suffering.

Beverly Bossler shows us elite male worry about women: that a well-born woman might fall to the status of courtesan or concubine. Stories show gentlemen nobly saving a girl by buying out her contract or freeing her when she falls into their service. As Bossler notes, a descent of this degree, while possible, was surely rare. She suggests plausibly that the popularity of such stories reflects

¹⁵⁰ Yüan Ts'ai, *Yüan-shih shih-fan*, 1, p. 20 (item 60). Here I follow Ebrey's translation, *Family and property*, pp. 225–6.

¹⁵¹ Ebrey, *The inner quarters*, p. 150; the translation is hers.

¹⁵² Ebrey, *The inner quarters*, pp. 149–50, her translation again.

elite male anxiety at the fact that “the social distinctions between the two groups of women [had become] precariously unstable.” This grew from a market that educated potential concubines and household courtesans in skills now equally characteristic of independent courtesans or wives: singing, zither playing, chess, sewing – and perhaps, above all, literacy (though not mentioned in Liao Ying-chung’s list), for literate concubines and courtesans were common. The stories, Bossler argues, “articulated the class anxiety of men who were surrounded by talented and educated young women, some of whom were their maids and others of whom were their sisters and daughters.”¹⁵³ More provocatively, she suggests a parallel between this blurring and the erosion of older class distinctions (and by “class” here she appears to mean mainly pedigree) that the market-based expansion of wealth and education had accomplished – a parallel with the character of the *shih* class itself from the twelfth century on.¹⁵⁴ We will see more of this idea of blurred boundaries in what follows.

Women’s danger

Worries about women’s vulnerability, then, cropped up in many arenas. What is striking is that in each arena we can see opposite worries: not over the dangers women suffered, but over the dangers they posed. Let us take things in reverse order. Bossler shows that courtesans and concubines aroused male anxiety not only for the harm that could befall them but for the harm they caused. As involvement with courtesans spread down the elite and official hierarchy in Southern Sung, and as concubines came to be more and more a standard part of elite life over the course of the dynasty, discourses associating both with personal dissipation and social decline emerged. These discourses were neither exclusive to nor necessarily especially characteristic of the Learning of the Way, though some men connected to that movement picked up and developed some aspects of them, but they were recurrent elements of moralizing discourse and increasingly so with time.¹⁵⁵ Interaction of officials with courtesans, which the Sung state had even promoted through

¹⁵³ Bossler, “Shifting identities,” p. 34. I believe Bossler now sees the fear of female class descent as a somewhat more realistic one, comprising more recorded real examples, than she did when she wrote this article. In the new book she strikes a balance: “On the one hand . . . these stories reflect the very real fact that women born into elite status could be vulnerable to falling into servitude, as the case of Han Qi’s mother and others like her show. On the other hand, these stories also reflect upper-class male anxieties about the tenuousness of status in their day. Here, as elsewhere, male anxieties are displaced onto the bodies of women.”

¹⁵⁴ Bossler, “Shifting identities,” p. 40.

¹⁵⁵ Here I take account of Bossler’s new construction of these matters in *Courtesans, concubines, and the cult of female fidelity*. For a good summary of the place of the Learning of the Way in the developments she is tracing, see pp. 416–18.

the official courtesans at state banquets, came to be condemned as harmful to government, and the state itself grew disenchanted with it – at least enough to call into question the use of public funds – and in Southern Sung shut down its courtesan training school.¹⁵⁶ Yüan Ts'ai, whose specific views rarely resemble Chu Hsi's, has much to say about how concubines can harm a family, by claiming a master's paternity for a child, forming illicit ties with his sons and servants, or enticing a powerful guest who may then harm the master.¹⁵⁷ Already in Northern Sung Ch'en Hsiang (1017–80), in his manual for local administrators, had warned readers to "be strict in the prohibitions [separating] inner and outer" and specifically not to "let concubines have the courtesan sort teach them singing and dancing." Here surely is a fear of the very blurring of boundaries between courtesans and household women that Bossler finds well along in Southern Sung, but also a fear lest independent women make contact with their dependent counterparts.¹⁵⁸

Even women weavers, so vulnerable in Ebrey's poems, look dangerous in at least one source. Ch'en Hsiang places "commoner women trading in loom-weaving" and his music-teacher courtesans in the same category – women who should not be allowed to frequent an official's household – and speaks of the dangers of both:

As the days and months go by, some may initiate illicit sex with young men of the family; others may promote contacts and collusions. For outsiders may track their comings and goings, inducing them into doing things in order to get things, and the [resulting] lawsuits may even cause problems in the inner quarters themselves.¹⁵⁹

Just who "commoner women trading in loom-weaving" are is unclear. My rendering deliberately leaves open whether they are trading cloth that they have woven or trading services as weavers in the official's household. Perhaps the latter is more likely in this context. The women in the sad poems, of course, weave at home (a trope of women's sadness for many centuries in China, though in earlier periods associated with love, not taxes); but lest we assume that they are utterly different from the traders in Ch'en's manual, we should recall that the woman in one poem is shown going to market to pawn, sell, and buy. There seems no reason that her sort could not also sell service as weavers to rich households.

As to widows, the dangers they posed were many and much noted. Yüan Ts'ai, who worried about their vulnerability and dependence, also feared for

¹⁵⁶ Bossler, "Shifting identities," p. 41. ¹⁵⁷ Yüan Ts'ai, *Yüan-shih shih-fan*, 3, pp. 49–50.

¹⁵⁸ Ch'en Hsiang, *Chou hsien t'i-kang* (*T'sung-shu chi-ch'eng* ed.), 1, p. 4. I owe the citation to Angela Leung in her "Women practicing medicine in premodern China," in *Chinese women in the imperial past: New perspectives*, ed. Harriet Thelma Zurndorfer (Leiden, 1999), pp. 102–3.

¹⁵⁹ Ch'en Hsiang, *Chou hsien t'i-kang*.

the man who married one, since she was **likelier than other wives to have affairs with other men**, might **favor her first husband's children**, and would be **hard to control**. This was with a husband present, but Yüan warned of **a widow's power of self-assertion when she was alone** as well, alerting men who might buy from a widow that **widows were likely to sell their children's property without the required official permission**.¹⁶⁰ This at least was illegal, though Yüan's warning implies it was not uncommon. But just as serious a danger was **the widow's legal right to take her own property – what she had received in her dowry, or what had been obtained with funds from her dowry – away with her in remarriage**. This issue of property rights became more acute as the Sung wore on. As **Bettine Birge** has shown, **by the thirteenth century some judges of the Learning of the Way bent had advanced from bemoaning their legal impotence to stop a widow from taking her property with her to violating written law by forbidding it**.¹⁶¹

At issue in all of this was **widows' dangerous autonomy**. For while Yüan Ts'ai's assumption that widows **depended on male kin** may have applied to some, others **functioned on their own with great success, running families and tending their wealth**, and – often with judges' support – **defending their rights against their in-laws in court**. The effects on their husbands' families could vary. The epitaph of Lady Wang (1123–93) of Ch'ung-jen county in Chiang-hsi is illustrative:

¹⁶⁰ Yüan Ts'ai, *Yüan-shih shih-fan*, 1, pp. 17–18, item 51, and 3, p. 61, item 60; cf. Ebrey, *Family and property*, pp. 219 and 311.

¹⁶¹ Bettine Birge, *Women, property, and Confucian reaction in Sung and Yüan China* (960–1368) (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 185–96. **Joseph McDermott**, in a review that, while largely positive, challenges Birge significantly on a number of points, doubts Birge's reading of **the judgments of Huang Kan**. The specific judgment for which he challenges Birge's reading, one in which a widow has left her husband's family after his death, leaving behind their children, to return to her natal family, but claims her dowry (including land) in a lawsuit, does contain ambiguities, and it is possible, as McDermott urges, that Huang Kan's initial statement that the woman's dowry lands "have become lands of the Xu [i.e. her husband's] family" refers only to the woman's children's normal right to inherit on their mother's eventual death and the husband's [but now the husband's family's] right to manage them in trust for the children in the meantime. But this misses certain points: first, that **it was not at all uncommon at this time for a widow to take her dowry away with her while leaving her children in her husband's family with the support of judges**, and that a previous judge had ruled that this widow had the right to do so before the case came to Huang Kan; second, that Huang Kan also argued, quite aside from property, that **the widow could not properly have returned to her parents even if childless, or even if she had taken her children with her: it was her responsibility to remain with her husband's family till the end no matter what**. That is, **Huang is pushing a radically new view of a widow's (non-)rights on several points, and on the question of her dowry he is adopting at best an extreme among available positions, even if that position has some basis in the law (the inheritance rights of children vis-à-vis their mother's dowry)**. Yet with all his doubts McDermott also agrees that **"it is clear that some thirteenth-century officials were thinking of reducing the independence of women's property rights in their marriage"**. See **Joseph McDermott, "Women of property in China," *International Journal of Asian Studies* 1 No. 2 (2004), pp. 214 and 212 respectively.**

The Cultivated Lady was of the Wang family . . . When she came of age, she was married to the local gentleman Miu Kung-chao. In her natal family she was a virtuous daughter; after marriage she was a worthy daughter-in-law; training her sons and managing a family, she was a fine mother. Within the family and without, all bowed to her; the neighborhood looked up to her and learned from her. Was this mere chance? It was because there was virtue in her, and because the purity and sincerity of her endowment and the height and breadth of her wisdom and caring sufficed for it. When she was first married, her father-in-law's second wife, née Li, was extremely strict, and did not grant her daughters-in-law a word or a glance. Only the Cultivated Lady could win her approval . . .

When her husband died, she made it her task to raise the family's standing. She worked to improve their livelihood, inviting famous scholars to teach her sons and grandsons. Later they passed the civil service examinations one after another. The family's wealth tripled. Her treatment of her natal kin was extremely generous . . . When her sisters were widowed and their young children stood all about, she cared for them more lovingly than for her own. Her family management was complete in every way; and to those under her she acted with kind intent. When a servant worked for her, his whole family depended on her for food. No less than thirty or forty houses that stood around hers did no cooking for themselves. Her nature was not to be stingy with wealth; in aiding the poor she worried that she would not do enough. When women were unable to marry, or when mourners could not manage a burial, they depended on her to take care of it . . . East of her house was Yüeh Dam, which watered two thousand *mu* of fields. The banks were always breaking down, and those who worked the fields suffered. The Lady took responsibility each year for repairing and rebuilding it. The families who owned the fields garnered the benefits while taking no part in the work or the expenses. So broadly and effectively did her charity and compassion extend to others.¹⁶²

Here is an epitaph that first conventionally celebrates the virtues of a daughter and daughter-in-law, but moves on to a picture of powerful widowhood and household-headship. Some of this might have raised eyebrows at the way the subject used the family's wealth. That she managed it well, raised the family's standing, and educated her sons for the examinations would win praise, but her special attention to her natal kin and in-laws might raise doubts. **A striking proportion of the wealth, which she spent on charity, left the household and patriline, going to kin of different surnames and to non-kin.** Perhaps her husband would have done the same, but (readers might think) perhaps not: **women were thought most likely to cherish obligations and sympathies beyond their husbands' patriline.** We do not read that these charities came from her dowry, as we probably would if they did, since that would make them more innocent to readers thinking of her children and her husband's patriline. If all this would be controversial in some eyes, why is it celebrated here? Perhaps because the epitaph conveys the viewpoint of distaff kin. The man on whose behalf the epitaph's author wrote was Ms. Wang's grandson

¹⁶² Ch'en Tsao, *Chiang-bu chang-weng chi* (SKCSCP ed.), 35, pp. 13a-14a.

through a daughter, whom she had treated with special generosity; **this was the man most likely to celebrate a widow's transmission of wealth to her natal and uterine families.**¹⁶³

Still we see in Ms. Wang a strong family manager and leader, far from Yüan Ts'ai's image of pathetic dependence. Such epitaphs are not unusual, as Ebrey has shown.¹⁶⁴ In one example a widow ignores her husband's last instructions by collecting the IOUs of the family's debtors, slights her sons' interests by granting nephews' land claims despite deadlines, but goes on to enlarge the family estate on her own.¹⁶⁵ Many surviving legal judgments show widows competing well in the rough world of Sung law courts; often the law is with them, but some widows' autonomy tended differently. One Southern Sung judgment treats **a powerful crime ring run by a widow and her son and grandsons, trading massively in illicit salt, selling "protection" to merchants, taxing commoners for fake public works, building a jail for opponents, and employing hundreds across three counties.** Perhaps Yüan Ts'ai would think **this woman was the creature of her son; but the judge, who punished her before any of her kin, did not.**¹⁶⁶

An explanation: women's autonomy

Autonomy, I suggest, is the specter haunting Sung men's worries over the dangers women posed, and even the worries about the dangers they suffered. Male (and perhaps female) fears of women's autonomy had two bases: first, **more access by women to wealth, promoted both by expanding commerce and by higher dowries;** and second, the **growth of women's literacy.** Sung women arguably had more access to wealth, and to more forms of wealth, than Chinese women of any other premodern period. Literacy in the Sung, as we have seen, grew to unprecedented levels, and it grew among women as well as men. Women might convert both wealth and literacy into certain kinds of autonomy. What follows will elaborate on this suggestion.

The idea that market activity could support female autonomy may seem strange when we have seen so much about a **market in women.** The commoner

¹⁶³ Ch'en Tsao wrote the epitaph not only on this man's behalf but in his voice; thus a note at the beginning tells us it was written "in another's stead" (*tai-jen*). The man in question was almost certainly Lo Tien (1149–94), a high official of Ch'ung-jen origins then serving in the capital, whose father may appear in the epitaph as the "holder of such-and-such office, Lo," married to her daughter, and whose brothers appear further on as husbands of her granddaughters (Ch'en Tsao, *Chiang-hu chang-weng chi*, 35, p. 15a). On this, see Robert p. Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, p. 232 item 43, and 301–2 n. 89, where Miu Kung-chao's name appears mistakenly as Miu Chao.

¹⁶⁴ Ebrey, *The inner quarters*, pp. 188–9, 200–2. ¹⁶⁵ Ebrey, *The inner quarters*, p. 188.

¹⁶⁶ *Ming-kung shu-p'an ch'ing-ming chi* 12, pp. 471–3; see McKnight and Liu, *The enlightened judgments*, pp. 435–9.

girls whose parents trained them in various arts and mortgaged them to elite men as concubines, courtesans, or maids were hardly (at that instant) autonomous: they were **tools in new market-based mobility strategies for their parents**. Yet the blurring lines between concubines, household courtesans, and maids that Bossler notes; the fact that all were traded in urban markets; and the fact that at least some concubines, like household courtesans and maids, served indentured terms that in principle were limited may have worked to make **all dependent household women look increasingly like outsiders of unsure loyalties to their masters – like creatures of the market**. This may underlie Yüan Ts'ai's **fear of concubines' free choice in matters of sex, outside contact, and so on**. It may also explain the Way Learning attempt from Southern Sung on, which **Neil Katkov** shows, to **include concubines in the ritual structure of the family as full members owed their own measured moral consideration**.¹⁶⁷ Katkov sees this as an attempt to free concubines of associations with licentiousness, and surely it was.¹⁶⁸ But by now licentiousness was strongly linked to the mixed courtesan–concubine complex of which Bossler writes, with its flavor of the urban entertainment world. Thus it is plausible to suggest that in drawing the walls of the family more firmly around concubines Chu Hsi and others were trying, again, to **stem the flow of market culture into social processes of core value – in this case the family**. Here they could see themselves as **defending families from the risks that concubines posed while defending concubines too**. In this, as in much we have seen, **vulnerability to the market and market-mediated autonomy were two sides of a coin**.

As to courtesans outside the household – those who were independent or in state service – their potential for distressing autonomy also drew cultural attention, and its roots again lay in the market-based entertainment world. **State courtesans had to entertain at banquets for officials, but these occurred at defined times**. Bossler shows that they could **entertain private clients** too, citing the Southern Sung memoir of the Northern Sung capital, *Tung-ching meng-hua lu* (The eastern capital: A dream of splendors past), in which courtesans leave a state banquet trailed by young men bearing gifts and eventually head “home” on horseback, each to the abode of the young man who won her favor.¹⁶⁹ In 1164, as Bossler shows, the government closed its school for courtesans, and for the rest of Southern Sung resorted more and more to the

¹⁶⁷ Neil Katkov, “The domestication of concubinage in imperial China” (diss., Harvard University, 1997). On concubines as family members, see now also Beverly Jo Bossler, *Courtesans, concubines, and the cult of female fidelity*, pp. 105–16 and 208–49. Bossler emphasizes that **Learning of the Way philosophers were speaking for and systematizing a broad emerging social consensus in emphasizing the familial place and parental role of concubines**.

¹⁶⁸ Katkov, “The domestication of concubinage,” pp. 101–3.

¹⁶⁹ Meng Yüan-lao, *Tung-ching meng-hua lu*, 9, p. 223; see Bossler, “Shifting identities,” pp. 9–10.

private market to staff its entertainments. But already in Northern Sung a number of current aphorisms, which Bossler also cites, hint that courtesans' patrons were all too aware that the objects of their desire could choose both with whom to associate and whom to love, that these were not the same thing, and that it was foolish to mistake a market transaction for a personal relation. A mid-eleventh-century collection lists under "Shameless" both "bragging that a courtesan loves you" and "having not been chosen by a courtesan, forcing one's way in at the door." Under "Dull and Flavorless" we find "sneaking out of a banquet without a courtesan" – that is, failing to persuade one to come along. And Su Shih, in his own collection, warns not to trust a courtesan who on parting "cries in grief that she wants to die."¹⁷⁰ Stephen Owen has suggested that a concern with whether one can believe a courtesan's professions of love is a new Sung phenomenon, almost unrepresented in the T'ang.¹⁷¹ Perhaps this was because, much more than before, Sung gentlemen were surrounded by courtesans who were market actors in the commercial entertainment world, or who had been hired into state service from that world and left one foot in it, or who, though living in a household under a master's eye, had entered by purchase or indenture from the same world and brought a scent of the market and its self-interested transactions with them.

For other women the market offered other possibilities. As early as 1926 Ch'üan Han-sheng found Sung women active in a range of commercial trades outside the home, even apart from courtesans, singers, dancers, and other entertainers: as managers of teahouses, wineshops, and restaurants; as incense-burners in inns; as pharmacists; as peddlers of embroidery; as brokers for maids.¹⁷² A well-known Hung Mai anecdote shows a commoner woman as entrepreneur, with the law backing her independence. Mr. Wang, a rich merchant but not much of a gentleman, takes up with a prostitute and ignores his wife's pleas to desist for their young daughter's sake. Indeed, he brings the prostitute home from a business trip and sets her up in an inn nearby. At this point the wife and husband go to court, where a judge grants a divorce and splits their property between them; the wife gains custody of their daughter by pleading the husband's ill influence. She now opens a pottery shop; when the husband comes by, she chases him off, scolding him for interfering in her "family affairs." All alone she raises her daughter and makes herself rich. Hung Mai gives no hint that her life or her success are extraordinary: they are background, and the story is in a collection of the "strange" because when

¹⁷⁰ For all of these, see Bossler, "Shifting identities," p. 8. The suggestion that these sayings share a focus on the courtesan's distressing autonomy, and that this is related to her status as a commercial entrepreneur, is my own.

¹⁷¹ Stephen Owen, personal communication, Cambridge, April 1996.

¹⁷² Ch'üan, "Sung-tai nü-tzu chih-yeh yü sheng-chi."

the daughter reunites her dead parents, their corpses turn their backs on each other while awaiting burial. Evidently a woman shopkeeper on her own, even a wealthy one, was not in herself "strange"¹⁷³

To shopkeepers, peddlers, brokers, artisans, and so on, one may add Ch'en Hsiang's "commoner women who trade in loom-weaving;" and Angela Leung has assembled sparse late Northern and Southern Sung sources to find Sung roots for the late imperial category of "three aunties and six grannies," working women who plied their trades door-to-door and whom Yüan, Ming, and Ch'ing commentators warned against. As Leung shows, the category comprised "religious women, women as intermediaries, and women in the medical trades," and she notes that these three turn up already linked to the same worries in the Sung if we combine Li Yüan-pi's admonition, in his 1117 administrator's manual, to avoid Buddhist nuns and midwives, with Yüan Ts'ai's 1178 warning to fend off Buddhist and Taoist nuns, women go-betweens, and female acupuncturists.¹⁷⁴ All of these, like Ch'en Hsiang's music-teacher courtesans and weavers for hire, were skilled practitioners who traveled from house to house or town to town offering services for money, often targeting women customers. Furth, as we have seen, shows that hostility to female medical practitioners may derive from the rise of male specialists promoting literate medicine. For the Buddhist and Taoist nuns one may point to the anti-clerical attitude that many Sung gentlemen feel or affect. But to account for the whole category we must look to the common factor of working travel, doubly unlike the ideal for elite women, and the potential to influence proper wives and other household women. Autonomous, mobile women, earning their own money, were to be kept away from women whom one hoped to confine, and whose own economic power was a matter of concern.

For their economic power was a matter of concern. Sung elite women, though they might not carry on economic activity from outside the household like commoner women (even if they traveled), did possess economic power: the control of their own dowries. In principle not only the dowry but any property acquired by using it was the woman's own, and legal decisions that allotted property based on whether it was bought with dowry funds or the husband's family's funds show that the principle often held in practice. The pitiable young woman in the poem who sold her clothes to buy yarn for weaving, if she was married and living in her husband's home, might prefer to get her yarn that way; for if the clothing came from her trousseau, she could legally hold

¹⁷³ Hung Mai, *I-chien chib, ping*, 14, pp. 484–5. See Ebrey, *The inner quarters*, p. 11, for a translation of the whole anecdote.

¹⁷⁴ Leung, "Women practicing medicine in premodern China," pp. 102–3. See also her "Medical learning from the Song to the Ming," in *The Sung–Yuan–Ming transition in Chinese history*, ed. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 396–7.

that the yarn, the cloth she wove with it (or what was left after tax was paid), and the money she sold it for were hers. Dowry was capital, and its income accrued to it. This was not new: dowry had legally belonged to Chinese women for centuries. What was new was that Sung dowries were much larger than in earlier periods, and often included land;¹⁷⁵ and that there were more uses out in the world for a well-defined piece of capital. This made dowries strategic in elite economic calculations, and women's control over them a salient issue. The need for a large dowry to make a marriage seems to be what created a historically unprecedented situation in codified Sung law: an unmarried daughter came to be entitled to a share of her natal family's estate, equal to half the share of a son. Whether this was really the law has aroused debate; but to my eye the evidence favors the position defended by Bettine Birge: that the half-share rule for daughters was real and had been largely codified by the last seventy years of Southern Sung, building on longtime Sung practice of including unmarried daughters in division even when sons were alive.¹⁷⁶

Dowry gave a wife a unique position in her husband's household: while she had property entirely her own, the males whose household it was very often did not. Rather, sons were coparceners in an estate that none owned individually until its division, which could not precede the father's death and sometimes did not occur for generations. As Birge notes, "the law did not intend to allow a wife ... to secretly hoard her wealth beyond the reach of her husband"¹⁷⁷ (though this does happen among modern farm families¹⁷⁸), and one judge

¹⁷⁵ Patricia Ebrey, "Shifts in marriage finance from the sixth to the thirteenth century," in *Marriage and inequality in Chinese society*, ed. Rubie Watson and Patricia Ebrey (Berkeley, 1991), pp. 97–132; see also Ebrey, *The inner quarters*, pp. 101–3.

¹⁷⁶ For Birge's direct response to the opposing view of Kathryn Bernhardt, see her review of Bernhardt's important *Women and property in China, 960–1949* (Stanford, 1999), in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 44 No. 4 (2001), pp. 575–99; and for a much fuller account of her position, see her *Women, property*, especially pp. 76–109. The reader interested in following tracing the debate should read these contributions alongside Bernhardt's book and her "The inheritance rights of daughters: The Sung anomaly?" in *Modern China* 21 No. 3 (July 1995), pp. 269–309. For the founding contributions to the debate, see Niida Noboru, *Chūgoku hōseishi kenkyū*, Volume 3: *Dorei nōdōbō, kazoku sonrakubō* (Tokyo, 1991), and Shiga Shūzō, *Chūgoku kazokubō no genri* (Tokyo, 1967). On Sung dowry generally, see Ebrey, "Shifts in marriage finance"; Ebrey, *The inner quarters*, pp. 99–113; Birge, *Women, property*, pp. 76–199; Yüan Li, "Sung-tai nü-hsing ts'ai-ch'an-ch'üan shulun," in *Chung-kuo fu-nü shih lun-chi, hsu-chi*, ed. Pao Chia-lin (Taipei, 1991), pp. 173–213; Brian McKnight, "Who gets it when you go: The legal consequences of the ending of family lines (*juebu*) in the Sung Dynasty (960–1279)," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 43 No. 3 (2000), pp. 314–63. Joseph McDermott, in a review that as we have already seen is judiciously critical of Birge's book on specific points, nonetheless affirms that "her account of women's property rights in the Song strikes me as, overall, impressive and persuasive, and a significant addition to our understanding of Song China." See McDermott, "Women of property," p. 210.

¹⁷⁷ Birge, *Women, property*, p. 128.

¹⁷⁸ For the now classic account of Chinese farm women's "private money," see Myron Cohen, *House united, house divided: The Chinese family in Taiwan* (New York, 1976). Cohen finds wives in joint families very

summed up the state's position thus: "The wife's assets are to be controlled by her together with her husband."¹⁷⁹ Her property might support the separate interests of her husband among the male coparceners, and husband and wife may often have managed it together – though nothing in the law prevented her from using it against his wishes if she preferred. But her assets were not combined with the husband's family's estate. They remained hers till she died, distinguished in contracts and on land registers, and might leave her husband's household legally if she was widowed or divorced.

The advantages that this offered to the woman and often her husband were disadvantages to his patriline as a whole, for a woman was a channel for property leakage. Not only might she carry it away if widowed, but she (or she and her husband) could lose it through unwise investments or expenditures, thus denying it to her children, who would inherit it when she died if she stayed in the household. A new Southern Sung movement to restrict her control over her dowry, both by inhibiting widows from removing it and by inducing wives to use it for household purposes or even to donate it wholly to the household, may owe something to the new tendency toward lineage organization and something to the new social philosophy of the Learning of the Way. Birge shows that epitaphs praising women for donating their dowry to the household double from Northern to Southern Sung and are strongly linked with Learning of the Way authors.¹⁸⁰ Dowry control was a form of autonomy that some saw as

likely to keep the amount, nature, and location of their dowry-derived funds secret from their husbands, who might well feel compelled, if they had this information, to take the money and turn it over to their father. This suggests a stronger enforcement of coparcener equality and sharing in these modern families than in Sung elite families, in which men clearly often had full knowledge of their wives' dowries and shared in their management, and which as Yüan Ts'ai tells us tolerated a fair degree of (in principle temporary) difference in wealth among brothers living together, built on different access to special sources of income such as official salary. The only source of such difference that could not eventually become a shared resource for division, however, was wives' dowry.

¹⁷⁹ Weng Fu, cited in Birge, *Women, property*, p. 128.

¹⁸⁰ Birge, *Women, property*, pp. 161–9; but see also the broader discussion surrounding this, beginning on p. 150. The tendency is, of course, not exclusive to the Learning of the Way group. Joseph McDermott, in his review of Birge's book, doubts that full donation of dowry was really being encouraged in such epitaphs. "In fact, the acts of wifely abnegation praised by the Learning of the Way advocates entailed gifts of money or material objects other than land; in other words, the generous Song wife, whose dowry we are led to believe commonly contained land, surrendered landed income rather than land." See Joseph McDermott, "Women of Property," p. 211. But several of the epitaphs Birge cites praised the wife for giving her entire dowry to her husband's family; others indeed only detail specific contributions to the household from the wife's money or goods. See Birge, *Women, property*, pp. 153–61. Patricia Ebrey, *The inner quarters*, pp. 108–9, covers similar ground in less detail. It may be fair to say that complete donation was the ideal that moralist authors wished most to encourage but that they were willing to praise a good deal less than that. Nonetheless, even in the cases of incomplete donation, living women are being encouraged, by the example of the dead woman and the praise she receives, to direct their expenditures from dowry toward the needs of the husband's family rather than their own, and Birge shows successfully that Learning of the Way authors were the likeliest to hold this up for praise.

a threat to social order and tried to restrict – through praise in epitaphs, but in practice through what combinations of persuasion and coercion we can only guess. The tendency diverged from the law, since judges largely continued to honor wives' right to their dowry even on departure from the household down to the end of the Sung. But this right was what made dowry donation virtuous; for it was celebrated as a *choice*, as expressing an autonomy redefined in proper moral terms.

What the Learning of the Way, and Chu Hsi in particular, offered in place of the dowered woman disposing of her own property beyond the household is revealing for what it incorporated from the surrounding reality: the woman as competent economic actor and decision maker. This is the role that for later periods Joseph McDermott has termed the “domestic bursar,” and that Birge has traced in detail in the Sung.¹⁸¹ The ideal wife, Chu Hsi showed through his praise in epitaphs, should act as family manager, relieving her husband of worries about money and property and freeing him for study and a life in the world. She should plan finances, invest, and collect rents, but all from a position safely *within* the household, and presumably having divested herself of private assets by giving her dowry to the household. Thus freely shedding her private interests, she would wield decision-making power in a central sphere of life, and could continue to act in the market, but as the agent of the whole. In thus finding a *kind* of autonomy for the wife, yet orienting it strictly toward the whole household, a much more confined field than real dowry-wielding women played on in his time, Chu and his followers confirm that autonomy, in this case based in the pursuit of wealth by dowered women through the market, was at issue in Sung elite males' fears. As so often, the Learning of the Way did not try to extirpate a new social phenomenon – in this case greater economic autonomy for women – but to shape it, bound it, or offer a substitute for it, in ways consistent with its program of moral reform.

Now to literacy. Bossler has shown how commonly elite women in the Sung could read; her evidence suggests that when epitaphs, for example, do not mention women's reading, it may be because it was taken for granted.¹⁸² Literacy for elite women was not new in the Sung; but, as Bossler notes, the Sung elite – male or female – was rapidly growing; and while she treats her

¹⁸¹ Birge, *Women, property*, p. 169–85, and see also her “Chu Hsi and Women's Education,” in *Neo-Confucian education: The formative stage*, ed. William Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 343–8. Joseph McDermott, “The Chinese domestic bursar,” *Dentō to kindaiika: (Chō) Takeda Kiyoko koki kinen ronbunshū, Ajia bunka kenkyū* special issue 2 (1990), pp. 15–31 (pp. 267–84). Note that the model of the “domestic bursar” was not a Learning of the Way *invention*, but can be found in much earlier times; what was special to the Learning of the Way was its incorporation in a general model of the virtuous wife that included (at the ideal extreme) dowry donation.

¹⁸² Beverly Bossler, “Women's literacy in Song China: Preliminary inquiries,” in *Ch'ing-chu Teng Kuang-ming Chiao-shou chiu-shih hua-f'an lun-wen chi* (Shijiazhuang, 1997), pp. 322–52.

evidence with due caution, it is reasonable that greater access to books, mediated by commercial printing, made it easier for women to obtain some education than it had been before even in elite families. To imagine things in crude practical terms, if an average elite family simply had *more books* than in earlier times, it had more educational resources to go around, so that while a son was busy at the books, there could still be some left over for a daughter. Even in a family not very interested in teaching its girls, a spillover effect would be more likely with books cheaper and less rare. Families who *were* interested in teaching their girls, as Bossler shows many were, would find it easier than it had ever been.¹⁸³

Two of Bossler's points are especially important. One is that *women formed contacts with other women* – as well as men – through letter writing. As she shows, some women were famous for their letters, and many more wrote them. She persuasively argues that this could allow them to be *network makers beyond their own kin*. The second point is *male ambivalence about women's writing*, especially when it circulated in the world (as much of it did) and won a name for its author. Many men found literacy in wives practically useful, aesthetically pleasing, or romantically appealing. Yet many – even the same men – thought it *socially threatening*, both by its associations with courtesans and entertainment (since much of the women's writing that circulated was poetry, and often the lyric (*tz'u*) poetry much practiced by courtesans), and because a woman who gained fame or formed ties through writing violated the separation and seclusion that were properly hers and the role division that kept her relationship with men hierarchical.¹⁸⁴ One may see this last anxiety in another piece of the *Neo-Confucian plan for women*, as the epitaphs of Chu Hsi and others found a key role for women's learning but again confined it to the home: *women were to be their children's teachers*.¹⁸⁵ This model was hardly new in Southern Sung, but the Learning of the Way adopted it and built it into its model of the virtuous elite woman's life. The parallel to the economic role of the treatment of women's is perfect: *just as a wife is to give up economic autonomy by donating her dowry to her household and assuming a praised but bounded autonomy as manager of the household's wealth, so she is to give up the use of her literacy for fame or influence outside the household, and instead use it to educate the household's children*.

¹⁸³ Birge had earlier shown that even Ssu-ma Kuang, a social conservative who disapproved of any movement of women toward the world outside and thus had no sympathy for literary fame among women (as in Bossler, "Women's literacy," p. 348 n.114), strongly recommended that women be educated in the *Analekts* and the *Classic of Filial Piety*, women's moral texts, and history. Birge, "Chu Hsi and women's education," p. 354.

¹⁸⁴ Bossler, "Women's literacy," pp. 338–40.

¹⁸⁵ See especially Birge, "Chu Hsi and women's education"; also Bossler, "Women's literacy"; and Ebrely, *The inner quarters*, pp. 183–6.

Now, worries about women's literacy are not necessarily only about autonomy – though both network-making and independent literary reputation could touch on that as well – but they definitely are about *difference*, and about the lines that ought to separate women from men. In broader terms both the worries about women's autonomy we have seen here, and the **concerns for role separation and gender hierarchy** that Bossler finds, are worries that women are becoming insufficiently different.¹⁸⁶ Recall Ebrey's suggestion that a shift in elite male gender style toward a "relatively subdued and refined figure" brought models of maleness and femaleness closer and thus spurred men to make women yet softer, yet slighter, yet more subdued. But **both a change in male literati identity and new tendencies among women brought the two closer together.** The Sung gentleman was indeed a "relatively subdued and refined figure" compared to some T'ang predecessors, but this was because his role in the world was on the one hand defined in part by his book-reading style of life, and on the other hand underlaid in practical terms by the wealth that allowed it. (Again we should recognize a pattern that printing and the growth of commerce had enabled.) That is, **the Sung gentleman owed his capacity to act as he did – in a sense owed his own autonomy – to his or his ancestors' success in gathering and keeping wealth, a kind of success that he, as a male, was free to pursue further in the outside world; and he owed his standing as a *shih* to his ability to read, write, and study certain texts, as well as to the ties he formed through his wealth and learning.** In this context, **women who, through much higher dowries and more opportunities to use them, exercised greater autonomy in the pursuit and maintenance of wealth, and who could also take part in the male-centered world of reading, writing, and connection-making in larger numbers than ever before, not only could be seen by men as increasingly like themselves, but were.**

We may return now to the three tendencies creating or stressing difference with which we began: footbinding, the new specialty in women's medicine, and the concern for sexual segregation. My suggestion is that **the urge, visible in all of these, to make or magnify difference was a male (and perhaps sometimes female) reaction to changes that, in elite male eyes, portended a new overlap in role and power between men and women.** Seen in this way the three fall together with several other phenomena that look like reactions of the same sort to the same problem: manual writers' warnings to keep certain kinds of women away from respectable households; the beginnings of what

¹⁸⁶ Compare the entire argument I am making here to de Pee's more general point, with regard to manuals of wedding ritual, that "Disturbed by the complex consequences of a commercial, mobile society and the participation of their fellow literati therein, Neo-Confucians instigated a reactionary move toward a pure, stable society, arranged according to inherent principles and imagined in the past," in which the production of properly separated male and female bodies by the manuals is simply one component. See de Pee, "The ritual and sexual meanings," p. 90.

would later be a stereotyped discourse about dangerous independent working women; some judges' distaste for the dowry right of widows, and first (however piecemeal) legal efforts to restrict them; a movement to encourage women to donate their dowries to their husbands' families; the rise of the model of the female domestic bursar; a new emphasis on the woman as household teacher; and the Learning of the Way effort to bring the last three of these into a coherent model that allowed, yet *defined and delimited*, both economic and educational autonomy for women. At the same time worries about female vulnerability not only reacted to genuine vulnerabilities that both the market in women and women's involvement in the market could create, but also could be a rhetorical platform from which to "spin" reassuringly the disturbing facts of female autonomy. That is, in the Sung, new developments in the position of women coexisted with discourses and movements that reacted against them. Arguably this interchange defined a set of issues in gender matters that would persist throughout the late imperial period.

Rising dowries: an attempt at explanation

This account has given considerable importance to women's access to property, thus to high dowries. But why should Sung dowries have been higher than T'ang dowries in the first place? With due caution Ebrey offers several possible explanations. One of her strands can be developed further. As she shows, dowry and brideprice in the T'ang – what the wife brought with her into a marriage, and what the groom's family paid to her family to make the marriage, respectively – were roughly equal or tilted toward brideprice, as when a family of lower pedigree would pay to gain a wife from one of higher. Either way brideprice flowed back, in whole or part, into the dowry, subsidizing the bride's family's outlay and ultimately – though only after the bride's death – restoring to the groom's family at least part of what it had paid. In the Sung, on the other hand, dowry came to exceed brideprice considerably: what came back (ultimately) to the groom's family via the bride far outweighed the betrothal gifts it had paid.

One may see this change as a fall in the relative value of wives.¹⁸⁷ If we read a marriage "match" as an equation, $\text{bride} + \text{dowry} = \text{groom} + \text{betrothal}$

¹⁸⁷ This highly simplifying but very useful initial step in thinking about this issue was first suggested to me by Earl Tai in a graduate colloquium on the T'ang dynasty in 1993. It should be clear that there are some aspects of the personal "value" of brides (as of grooms) that I do not touch on in the status-oriented analysis that follows. In particular, brides were important simply as the mothers of the next generation. I assume that the value of children to elite families (our sole pool for knowledge of marriage patterns in either dynasty) did not change between T'ang and Sung and thus that this is not a relevant factor in explaining change. Wives could also be important as transmitters of culture and learning, and there is reason to think that more weight was placed on this role of women in the Sung than before. As I suggest below, my analysis sees this as a factor that may have kept Song dowries from rising even higher than they did.

gifts – in the sense that for each family to be satisfied, the gain to both had to be seen as in rough balance – then a fall of brideprice against dowry implies that grooms have risen in value against brides. What could explain such a shift? Assume that the transacting families get two sorts of desirable things when they acquire a wife for their son or a husband for their daughter: first, connections – a channel into desirable social or political networks – and second, the status that accrues to a family by adding a high-status member. One can imagine either of these decreasing in value on the average bride's side compared to the average groom's. But for the first to decrease – for ties to brides' families to become consistently less valuable than ties to grooms' families – would require a dramatic shift toward consistent hypergamy, upward marriage by women; and for this there is no evidence in the Sung, when women sometimes moved in both directions between the same families, and when other marriages formed complex networks not reducible to a single directionality. The change, perhaps, is thus in the second element: not in the relative status that belongs to a bride's *family* (and thus the usefulness of ties to it) but in the status that inheres in the marrying woman *herself*, compared to a husband – and in her capacity to carry that status with her from one family to another.



Can we imagine the elements of status shifting between T'ang and Sung so as to change the balance between the status that husbands provided to their in-laws by association and the status that wives carried with them into a husband's family? In fact a picture of T'ang–Sung change that would satisfy these conditions is widely accepted in the field: namely that in T'ang, much more than in Sung, status was dependent on hereditary *pedigree*. Of course this applies only to the T'ang aristocracy, or the broader officeholding elite that generally accepted pedigree as a basis of status and a resource for marriage; but then our only evidence on marriage in the T'ang comes from such strata. In the Sung, as the field also accepts, status was built of a complex of resources that comprised style of life (including education and classical literacy), wealth, and office or the potential for office, while pedigree was (or was regarded as) a much less reliable indicator of present and future status than these. This will support an argument that status inhered less easily in the sheer person of a bride in the Sung than it had in the T'ang and before. For in the T'ang the key resource of pedigree inhered in a wife as easily and valuably as in a husband. She would be known as a woman of (say) the Po-ling Ts'ui clan after she married just as she had been before; it would be noted in her epitaph, along with the names of illustrious Ts'ui forebears; and people who met the family in her lifetime would see (or hear) what sort of woman had married into it. But from the T'ang to the Sung the declining meaning of pedigree left the bride with fewer personal status resources relative to the groom. A woman could carry her knowledge of her family's style of life, knowledge of how to speak,

dress, eat, and live, into a marriage, and education too; and these were important, status-defining, and status-transmitting. But the groom could carry all of these as well, yet he could also hold office or show potential for it, while she could not. Aside from office the man also had much greater potential to generate, acquire, or replenish wealth, for all the wife had in that line was her dowry, which (on the T'ang model) was funded by the groom's family's gifts in the first place and tended to be small – certainly no contribution comparable to her husband's eventual inheritance from his parents' estate. When pedigree was a large part of status, that large part of status was something in which bride and groom could be relatively equal. When status comprised wealth, potential for office or for examination success, and education/cultivation, the advantage (given small dowries) was the groom's.



Thus after the T'ang–Sung transition a higher proportion of a couple's eventual combined status would rest from the start in the groom. But “given small dowries,” above, is crucial. For here there was room for movement. If, seen as one partner in a match, the bride had lost relative status with the decline of the one resource (pedigree) to which wife and husband had once had equivalent access, displaced by a complex of elements some of which were still potentially on par (lifestyle and education) but two of which were not (office and the creation of wealth), then some balance could be restored by increasing her personal wealth. And this is just what happened. Dowries rose to a point where they *were* in the same category as a husband's expected inheritance: to roughly half, to be precise, judging by the half-share inheritance rule later formalized in law. (Note that on this argument parents of daughters should also have made more effort to educate them, so as to place that element of status also closer to par and keep the compensating expense of dowry within manageable limits.) If all this is right, then the rise in dowries is the expectable consequence of a situation in which (1) marriages are made with an eye to an access to status in the person of the marriage partner, as in both T'ang and Sung; (2) some elements of status are closed to wives, as in both T'ang and Sung; and (3) pedigree that inheres equally in both men and women declines in significance, as happened from T'ang to Sung.¹⁸⁸ It is a consequence, that

¹⁸⁸ In this respect – the focus on the larger changes of the T'ang–Sung transition and the tendency for marriage to take place in a more free-form competition for status once pedigree is no longer reliable – the explanation I offer here strongly resembles Ebrey's. I do not think, however, that we need to look for reasons why dowry would better serve status-seeking marriage strategies than brideprice would, a line of argument I find unconvincing in Ebrey's work. To say that “dowry was a superior bait” in status-seeking marriage “because betrothal gifts were supposed to be returned as dowry” is puzzling against the empirical fact that, as she shows, some betrothal gifts in T'ang well exceeded dowry, meaning that the principle that “betrothal gifts were supposed to be returned as dowry” had not always held; and against the logical fact that the principle in T'ang might also be stated as “dowry was supposed to be paid for by betrothal gifts,” – which in T'ang seems to have held more fully at the empirical level

is, of the larger changes of the T'ang–Sung transition, the movement from a society in which status comprised pedigree and access to office to one in which status derived from wealth and what wealth could buy or cultivate, including access to office – from a status system shaped by the state and the standards of hereditary elites to a status system shaped, in varying proportions over time, by the state and the market.

Conclusion

The general argument of this section may be reordered as follows. A shift in the bases of status away from pedigree and toward wealth and wealth's consequences – founded in the decline of the T'ang aristocracy and the rise of an elite whose status was ultimately rooted in wealth – jarred the balance between bride and groom as vessels of status, and motivated a sharp rise in dowries to restore the balance. But the rebalancing had unexpected consequences, for given pre-existing Chinese law on wives' control of dowry and given increasing opportunities for investment of capital, larger dowries gave wives greater potential economic autonomy within the household, by increasing both their personal wealth in relation to that of the household and their ability to use it for the household or for themselves. The anxieties about elite women's autonomy that this generated were reinforced by the growth of new independent female market occupations among commoners, by the growing presence of a category of often autonomous female entertainers – courtesans – in elite men's lives, and by the tendency for dependent women to enter the household through the market, rather than hereditarily from among the “mean” strata as (probably) in the T'ang. At the same time a rising tendency for elite women to be educated, which may have been encouraged by the same status-balancing in marriage but was also enabled by printing, increased their capacity both for contacts outside the household and for reputation in the larger world. Insofar as autonomy of any sort had long been thought to belong most fully to males, while economically based autonomy was a foundation of male literati position in the Sung, and insofar as education and classical literacy were primary outward signs of gentlemanly status, the two strands of change together brought women's expanded spheres of action threateningly close to important bases of elite male identity in the Sung. (That this account owes much to both Bossler and Ebrey should be clear.)

as well. Ebrey, “Shifts in marriage finance,” p. 117, and more broadly pp. 112–21. What happened was arguably a change in these principles themselves, and I think we can look instead to the ways the changes in the status system differentially affected the personal status-bearing potential of the two marriage partners.

Another way of looking at this is that the status system, in old-fashioned sociological terms, had shifted from one based significantly on **ascription** (here inherited pedigree) to one based in theory on **achievement**. Women's lesser standing beyond the household was one form of purely ascribed status still stoutly defended in the elite male worldview. To the extent that women achieved in male spheres, such as literary learning and reputation, or the pursuit of wealth beyond the household – to the extent that their autonomy exceeded roles set by ascription – **they brought forms of status derived from achievement into contradiction with those derived from ascription, and at the same time blurred the lines that in the male (and female?) imagination distinguished men from women.** Most of the new cultural phenomena traced in this section, from footbinding, through women's medicine, through the movement to return dowry to patrilineal control, even to worries about women's vulnerability, make sense as **reactions and responses to the threat of such crossing and blurring of boundaries.**

RELIGION

Buddhism

Once upon a time, scholars' story of the Sung's place in the history of Chinese religion was a story of the **decline of Buddhism.** To deconstruct this story would be to prop up a horse too near dead to beat, and it needs mention only because readers may still find it in textbooks or in reissued classics of scholarship. Insofar as the story emphasized the Sung's **ostensibly re-Confucianizing elites** and **the rise of the Learning of the Way,** it read the Sung as a time of **secularization and rationalization of ritual and morality** – even of the **decline of religion,** if by religion we mean beliefs oriented toward superhuman, personality-bearing beings, and practices oriented either toward other-worldly seeking or toward this-worldly prayer, good conduct, and reward. In the Learning of the Way itself we see something like this secularizing impulse, *as impulse*; but this is far from the whole picture, since the movement also had a strong religious dimension, or more precisely **a dimension that imitated, in order to displace, the clerical and lay religions it found around it.** But to imagine the Sung as a time of secularization is to miss too much: a sheer wealth of **new religious phenomena, including new gods, new cults, new sects, new texts, new practitioners, and new and more complex relationships between laity and clergy.**

This is one side of religious social change in the Sung: rich innovation and variety, hard to grasp in a unifying way. Yet there are general trends of change. On one hand we see again the three broader influential processes: **commerce,**

printing and greater access to texts, and a relative retreat of the state from arenas in which it originally had claimed more authority. But here these three work to produce a single strong tendency that crosscuts much of the new variety. This is a *laicization of religion*: a relative shift in the balance of power and initiative from practitioners toward the laity. One impetus to laicization was precisely the growth of a commercial market in religion, in which the laity embodied the demand side while the clergies, alongside a host of other practitioners and the makers of religious images, amulets, and texts, offered their services, their goods, and their pictures of the world of gods and spirits to lay seekers, usually for money. In this story of change, not decline, Buddhism has an important place.¹⁸⁹

The late T'ang persecutions had dealt a blow to monastic power, but the proscription did not last,¹⁹⁰ and from early Sung we see a clergy that has largely regained its social place. As before, laymen of any class might give to monasteries, keep Buddhist precepts, hire monks for funeral or sacrificial rites to the dead or healing rituals for the living, and pray to gods of Buddhist origin for aid in life and death. The usual image of the afterlife for Chinese from the Sung (or the tenth century) on – an underworld purgatory of ten courts and kings, meting out punishments and lives to the dead – was Buddhist in origin.¹⁹¹ Monasteries were impressive edifices on the Sung landscape and major centers of wealth.¹⁹² The state still relied on monks (among others) to pray for the emperor; and, as in the T'ang, court patronage was crucial to the monastic institution, at least for the first century of the Sung.¹⁹³ At this level of generality, organized Buddhism in the Sung would have looked familiar to a time traveler from the T'ang.

¹⁸⁹ In recent work, the notion of “laicization” that I am arguing for here, without the word itself, is perhaps most closely approached by Edward Davis, particularly in the last chapter of his very important book *Society and the supernatural in Sung China* (Honolulu, 2000), and by Valerie Hansen in her *Changing gods in medieval China*, which builds an argument for the power of local lay choice in the rise and fall of deity cults. See also my own *Way and byway*, which again without using the word “laicization” makes arguments about phenomena in Sung religion that parallel or underlie what I am arguing here.

¹⁹⁰ Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang* (Cambridge, 1987), chapter on Hui-ch'ang proscription.

¹⁹¹ Stephen Teiser, “The growth of purgatory,” in *Religion and society in T'ang and Sung China*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu, 1993), pp. 115–47.

¹⁹² Chikusa Masaaki, *Chūgoku Bukkyō shakaishi kenkyū*, Tōyōshi kenkyū sōkan 34. (Kyōto, 1982), pp. 145–98 and 261–19.

¹⁹³ For a good recent overall account of the sangha's activities on behalf of the imperial house, see Mark Halperin, *Out of the cloister: Literati perspectives on Buddhism in Sung China, 960–1279* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), pp. 112–58. On imperial patronage and its importance for the Ch'an school, see Morten Schlütter, *How Zen became Zen: The dispute over enlightenment and the formation of Chan Buddhism in Song-dynasty China* (Honolulu, 2008), pp. 39–54, especially 45 ff.; on the Buddhist-imperial relation, see also Albert Welter, “A Buddhist response to the Confucian revival: Tsan-ning and the debate over *wen* in the early Sung,” in *Buddhism in the Sung*, ed. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz Jr. (Honolulu, 1999), pp. 21–61; and Chikusa Masaaki, *Chūgoku Bukkyō shakaishi kenkyū*, pp. 83–110.

But at a finer resolution, change would have been clear too. A new balance in **lay-clerical relations** is evident in a number of otherwise distinct phenomena. **Mark Halperin** has found sharp differences between **gentlemen's written commemorations for monasteries and monks** in the Sung and in the T'ang. T'ang inscriptions were remarkably uniform, and their authors put themselves at the clergy's disposal: "Literati adopted the personae of **followers of the Buddha, forming a devout congregation that, guided by a united and sage clergy, readily employed the *sangha's* language in their essays on its behalf.**"¹⁹⁴ Sung inscriptions, by contrast, varied greatly, and their authors used them for a wide range of purposes, presenting clergy and world (when that was their topic) in a wide variety of relations – in effect **seizing the authority to write the meaning of monasteries themselves without following the *sangha's* lead.** **The variety of enterprises and purposes embodied in the inscriptions was independent of whether authors were personally devoted to Buddhism.**

Halperin himself rejects a tempting account of this shift in terms of "secularization," and points to Sung gentlemen's more "sacral" view of themselves: "elite writers did not so much see Buddhist clergy in lay terms but rather regarded themselves as specialists who also dealt with the sacred, albeit of another sort."¹⁹⁵ But such **an assumption of sacral authority by lay writers,** however special literati self-views may have been, seems a prime example of **laicization.** Another way to see Halperin's findings, one which might find more likeness between gentlemen and other laymen than Halperin does, is that gentlemen who commemorated monastic institutions were, in crude terms, "shopping" for answers to questions of their own: that Buddhism itself, for some the only place to shop, for others was simply one stop of many. On the shopping metaphor, which is a good deal more than metaphor, more below.

Parallel change is evident on the clergy's side. New trends in Ch'an in the Sung, specifically the important twelfth-century dispute between those claiming membership in the **Lin-chi** and **Ts'ao-tung traditions** and pitting **"Kung-an introspection"** against **"silent illumination,"** seem to have grown out of **intensified competition for literati followers.**¹⁹⁶ Starting in the 1070s the central government pulled back its formerly active hand in Buddhist governance, **ceasing to grant official names to monasteries** and, as we have

¹⁹⁴ Halperin, *Out of the cloister*, p. 59.

¹⁹⁵ Halperin, *Out of the cloister*, p. 236.

¹⁹⁶ Morten Schlütter, "Silent illumination, Kung-an introspection, and the competition for lay patronage in Sung dynasty Ch'an," in *Buddhism in the Sung*, ed. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz Jr. (Honolulu, 1999), pp. 109–47; see also Schlütter, *How Zen became Zen*, pp. 55–7, 125–7, and 175–82; see also his earlier treatment in Schlütter, "Chan Buddhism in Song-dynasty China (960–1279): The rise of the Caodong tradition and the formation of the Chan school" (diss., Yale University, 1998), pp. 358–72.

seen, offering ordination for sale instead of by scriptural examination. Prefectural administrators continued to control abbacies in the most important monasteries, but insofar as this was now the main locus of state influence, it represented a devolution of power; and in shaping a prefect's choice, literati or other wealthy local elites were often decisive. In Morten Schlütter's persuasive account, the intensified competition among Ch'an masters directly reflects the reduced role of court patronage for Buddhism in late Northern and in Southern Sung, and an increasing need to appeal to laymen (in this case gentlemen) and to local administrators for support.¹⁹⁷

Much other evidence suggests that lay relations grew more important for Buddhists in and after this transitional period. The high official and lay devotee Chang Shang-ying (1043–1122) is one example. Miriam Levering has shown how important study with Chang was for the leading Ch'an master Ta-hui (1089–1163). Though a layman, Chang influenced Ta-hui's own Buddhist learning by urging him to look into Hua-yen texts, but just as important, Levering shows that Ta-hui's experience with Chang was decisive for his later career, in which the instruction of laymen was central and ability to enter into gentlemanly discussions of both Buddhist and Neo-Confucian ideas was crucial.¹⁹⁸ Another sort of evidence is Chang's own work, the *Further record of Ch'ing-liang*, a record of his 1087 pilgrimage to a leading Buddhist site, Mount Wu-t'ai in modern Shan-hsi.¹⁹⁹ Chang's dual standing as lay devotee and successful official mattered here, since his capacity to mediate with high court circles was what moved the monastic leaders of Mount Wu-t'ai to ask him to record his pilgrimage, to promote the site's reputation and draw state favor. But the text itself shows the authority that lay insights and experience could hold even in a monastic Buddhist framework by this time. Chang records the spectacular visions – golden arrays of bodhisattvas spanning the sky – that he and his companions saw as he toured the mountain. The monks with him told

¹⁹⁷ See Schlütter, "Chan Buddhism," pp. 55–77. On monk certificates, see Chikusa, *Chūgoku Bukkyō shakaishi kenkyū*, pp. 17–82; on name grants, see *ibid.*, pp. 83–110; and Takao Giken, *Sōdai Bukkyōshi no Kenkyū* (Kyoto, 1975), pp. 57–60.

¹⁹⁸ Miriam Levering, "Dahui Zonggao and Zhang Shangying: The importance of a scholar in the education of a Song Chan master," *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies* 30 (2000), pp. 117–39. On Ta-hui's extensive development of the lecture form known as *p'u-shuo* specifically for lay audiences, see also Levering, "Ta-hui and lay Buddhists: Ch'an sermons on death," in *Buddhist and Taoist practice in medieval Chinese society: Buddhist and Taoist studies II*, ed. David W. Chappell (Honolulu, 1987), pp. 181–206.

¹⁹⁹ Chang Shang-ying, *Hsu Ch'ing-liang chuan*, in *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (Tokyo, 1924–32), 51, pp. 1127a–35a. In accepting the attribution of this work to Chang as at least roughly reliable I follow Robert Gimello. As he suggests, it is possible that in its present form the *Further record* is the work of other hands, but there is every reason to believe that much of its content reproduces or derives from a record originally written by Chang. See Robert Gimello, "Chang Shang-ying on Wu-t'ai Shan," in *Pilgrims and sacred sites in China*, ed. Susan Naquin and Yü Chün-fang (Berkeley, 1992), pp. 89–149.

him they had never had such visions in their own years there; evidently it was Chang's presence that had let them see the bodhisattva Manjusri displayed in unparalleled glory. Soon Chang learned why he evoked these visions: in a past life he had been one of Manjusri's own kin. The message is extraordinary: **past kinship – a lay tie if there ever was one, even if mediated by Buddhist rebirth – may outdo a life of clerical cultivation in giving access to divine presence.** Yet the text was accepted by the monastic leadership at Wu-t'ai as an apt celebration of the mountain and its bodhisattva, was appended to two earlier accounts of the site, and was eventually taken into the canon of Buddhist scriptures.

Chang's court ties may be one clerical motive for promoting such a text, but one must also consider that pilgrimage and wide-ranging religious donation were growing in this period and brought prestige and income to centers like Wu-t'ai, that **pilgrimage sites competed, and that to celebrate lay capacity for spiritual experience might appeal to lay visitors and patrons.** The monastic leadership at Wu-t'ai, that is, could see Chang Shang-ying as a conduit not only to the court, but to other laymen who might follow. **Clerical eagerness for lay ties inevitably yielded some religious authority to the laity.**

Chang Shang-ying was special, both in rank in office and in his devotion to Buddhism. But the new realities of late Northern Sung and after gave many well-off men power vis-à-vis the clergy in more private ways. The sale of ordination certificates was especially important. We have seen that **certificates became a speculative object and a form of money.** This could happen, of course, only because of the underlying demand for clerical status. Scholarship on the sale of ordination has often treated it as part of an ostensible **decline in clerical quality and intellectual vigor, part of the long-term decline – again – of Buddhism (and Taoism).** Its intellectual impact is beyond this chapter's scope, though surely the possibility of ordination for money did nothing to *exclude* those drawn to textual study and doctrinal discourse, who must have been a minority of those drawn into the clergy at any period. The point easy to miss is that **selling ordination massively decentralized and dispersed control over clerical status, and thus potentially over the content of what monks (and Taoist priests) knew, read, and professed.** With no gatekeeping central examination controlled by the state and court monks, anyone who wanted the life of a religious practitioner and could chase up the price of a certificate could satisfy his ambition, whatever his views. Thus the sale of ordination probably reinforced the growth of new sects, practices, liturgies, and home-grown practitioners. (Not all promoters of new sects and new practices were ordained, of course – perhaps not even most, but variety among the ordained must have reinforced – as well as responded to – variety among the unordained, whose

services came at a lower charge but who might do much the same things for their lay clients.²⁰⁰)

The key word here is “price.” Few would-be clerics could afford a certificate. Those with supportive clerical or lay followers who might command little wealth individually could still buy one with pooled funds. Monasteries could fund their own novices’ certificates too.²⁰¹ But the high price also offered a new role to the wealthy layman: to buy ordination for the candidate who could not afford it. We find this praised as charity in gentlemen with no personal loyalty to Buddhism or Taoism. The local Chiang-hsi gentleman Chu Te-yu became known for charity because he gave food to the hungry, clothing to the cold, medicine to the sick, wedding funds to those too poor to marry – and ordination money to Buddhists or Taoists who could not pay for themselves.²⁰² Chu died in 1107, so such patronage was already being celebrated only thirty years after ordination sale began. The text does not suggest an interested motive for Chu – this is an epitaph, a praise genre – but it is easy to find gentlemen who ordained a monk or priest in order to provide services for a temple or shrine attached to their family.²⁰³ From the late eleventh century this may often have staffed the tomb-tending “merit cloisters” and private chapels (*an*) kept by the wealthy.²⁰⁴ There is some likeness here to the clerical livings that English gentry disposed of after Henry VIII’s dissolution of the monasteries.²⁰⁵ In both cases centralized control over religious status – in England resting in the church, in China in the state – devolved to local families of standing or wealth. In China the literati had no sole authority, of course – the same patronage could come from anybody or any group with the money. But often this would be a wealthy or gentlemanly family, and the impact on the relations of many individual clerics to local lay elites was surely profound.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁰ For evidence of this stratification of the religious market in the case of Taoists, with the ordained charging higher fees than the unordained for the same rituals, see the Hung Mai story cited in Hymes, *Way and byway*, p. 45.

²⁰¹ For examples of both, see Chikusa, “Sōdai baichō kō,” pp. 56–63.

²⁰² Hsieh I, *Ch’i-t’ang chi* (SKCSCP, pieh-chi), 8, pp. 18a–20a.

²⁰³ See, for example, the repeated ordinations funded by the Li family of Ch’ung-jen county to staff what was in effect a family shrine to a Taoist divinity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, cited in Hymes, *Way and byway*, p. 134. In his travel diary Lu Yu tells of meeting a Taoist who had received his certificate as a gift from the general Yüeh Fei. See Lu Yu, *Ju Shu chi*, entry for 8th month, 4th day, in *Wei-nan wen-chi* (Ssu-pu pei-yao ed.), 45, p. 16a.

²⁰⁴ Chikusa Masaaki, “Sōdai bunji kō,” *Tōyō gakuhō* 61 Nos. 1–2 (1979), pp. 35–67; and “Sō-Gen Bukkyō ni okeru andō,” *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 46 No. 1 (1986), pp. 1–28.

²⁰⁵ See, for example, Margaret Bowker, “The Henrician reformation and the parish clergy,” *Historical Research* 50 No. 121 (October 12, 2007), pp. 39–40.

²⁰⁶ See also Kanai Noriyuki, who shows that in Southern Sung, monastic leaders seeking lay support from local lay elites for repair or reconstruction of their institutions might need to agree to take on monks who had been ordained locally. Kanai, “Sōdai no sonsha to Bukkyō,” *Bukkyō shigaku kenkyū* 18 No. 2 (1976), pp. 31–57.

I have dealt so far with Buddhist relations with the state and with elites. But one of the most striking phenomena of Sung lay religion is the growth of societies whose members, overwhelmingly *not* elite, sought to live in partial accord with monastic rules without leaving lay life. As Barend ter Haar has shown, such societies were only the most specialized expression of wider patterns of lay piety.²⁰⁷ The difference from Taoism is stark. It is not meaningful to speak of “lay Taoists” in the Sung.²⁰⁸ Taoism remained a practitioner’s religion, even when laymen hired the practitioners for rituals to gods of their own choice or the souls of their own dead, or used Taoist incantations or amulets, torn from liturgical context, for their own purposes. But lay Buddhists abounded: people rigorously devoted to Buddhist practice and – so far as one can tell – to Buddhist views of life, who appear more and more in the sources after about the year 1100. They focused on cultivating Fields of Merit – performing charitable acts (alms to the poor, donations to clergy, bridgebuilding and roadbuilding for society at large) to gain merit for themselves or dead kin – and on reciting the name of Amitabha, something we now associate with a distinct “Pure Land” Buddhism but which from early Sung on had been preached to laymen by monks of the T’ien-t’ai school.²⁰⁹ Such practices in fact crossed the lay–clerical line: monks were as likely to pursue them as laymen, and often led laymen in group practice, sometimes in vast assemblies devoted (for instance) to reciting sutras collectively. But it is still striking that the practices could also be carried on by laymen on their own, in groups or alone, for personal salvation or cultivation, without monks’ aid.

We may think of lay piety as taking most developed form among highly motivated and devout lay Buddhists, yet extending through levels of the less devoted or informed to the population at large. Here Buddhist-style recitations, incantations, rituals, and charities, often in adapted or mixed forms, floated free in an open market accessible to those who, again, “shopped” among traditions and clergies and picked out practices that served a moment’s need – either on their own or hiring clerics for the job. But at the upper end of this lay scale were twelfth- and thirteenth-century movements such as the White Cloud and White Lotus societies or the People of the Way (*Tao-min*). The last was the name (individually “Man of the Way,” “Friend of the Way,” “Lady

²⁰⁷ Barend ter Haar, *The White Lotus teachings in Chinese religious history* (New York and Leiden, 1992), pp. 16–113.

²⁰⁸ Davis confirms the point: “there were no Taoists in Chinese society except Taoist priests and Ritual Masters.” See Davis, *Society and the supernatural*, p. 306 n. 18. Obviously his point and mine depend on drawing one’s dividing line at the boundary between practitioners (occupational suppliers of services) and lay, not between ordained and lay.

²⁰⁹ See Daniel Stevenson, “Protocols of power: Tz’u-yün Tsun-shih (964–1032) and T’ien-t’ai lay Buddhist ritual in the Sung,” in *Buddhism in the Sung*, ed. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz Jr. (Honolulu, 1999), pp. 340–408.

of the Way”) taken by lay believers of one sort, who founded small private chapels, pursued many of the same good works as other lay Buddhists (donation, alms, building, reciting and printing sutras), but also emulated monks through reduced sets of vows. Ter Haar lists those against killing, stealing, adultery, lying, and intoxicating drinks, but notes that much longer lists also existed. On taking vows these believers inserted special Buddhist words into their names, marking themselves as people set apart by the choice of a hard path. Yet they remained in lay life, marrying, having children, and doing normal jobs. They drew attacks from officials and Learning of the Way teachers alike, usually the stereotyped charges of sex-mixing, night meetings, and (the most serious) vegetarianism and devil-worship, and sporadically the state actively persecuted them. Ter Haar shows that the charge of Manichaeism often brought against them had no basis in their own activity or self-description.

One should not overstate the independence of lay piety or even of self-declaredly distinct paths like that of the People of the Way. As Ter Haar stresses, where lay activities were collective or organized, monastic leadership was common, though not universal. And as Daniel Stevenson and others have shown, from rather early in Northern Sung monastic preachers, particularly of the T’ien-t’ai school, worked to foster lay piety by offering lay-oriented ritual guides and forms.²¹⁰ Stevenson reasonably suggests that much of the lay action so striking in the sources may have been spurred by monastic promotion. But one must ask why such outward-reaching monastic tendencies were so prominent now, and why monastic schools that courted laity – Ch’an largely at the elite level, T’ien-t’ai more broadly – were the most successful in the Sung. T’ien-t’ai’s outreach even generated, in effect, a whole new clerical “school,” the Pure Land patriarchate, arising in the thirteenth century out of the very lay societies T’ien-t’ai masters had promoted.²¹¹ The answer, surely, is that outreach to the laity fit several new facts of Sung life: that Sung laity possessed new wealth, new literacy, and thus new interest in scripturally based religious practice, but interest also in any other religious benefit that prayer, ritual, or money could secure; that this was a market willing, literally, to pay for rituals or forms of piety that would work well on its own ground; that this posed an opportunity for practitioners willing to reach out to the new market; and that if Buddhists failed to do so, they could be outcompeted by others, among whom Taoists were prominent but hardly alone. The forms of monastic Buddhism that for sincere religious reasons found lay outreach natural were

²¹⁰ Stevenson, “Protocols of power.”

²¹¹ Daniel Getz, “T’ien-t’ai Pure Land societies and the creation of the Pure Land patriarchate,” in *Buddhism in the Sung*, ed. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz Jr. (Honolulu, 1999), pp. 477–523.

the likeliest to thrive in this setting, and to leave abundant records of their thinking and practice for us today. Cultivating the new market by promoting forms of their own practices within it was both an accommodation of and in the long run an impetus to lay power.²¹²

We see this market-serving tendency and its competitiveness in another phenomenon of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: special new rituals for the dead performed by Buddhist clerics for lay householders. The Retreat of Water and Land, invented in the tenth century, became one of the two commonest large-scale rites for the protection of souls; the other was its Taoist equivalent, the Retreat of the Yellow Register. Both took place sometimes in private households or at other lay sites by clerics hired for the purpose, sometimes at monasteries or Taoist abbeys for lay audiences. In either case monetary payment was the rule.²¹³ Edward Davis shows that the two rituals grew more alike over time, coming to focus in similar ways on summoning souls and on parallel means of freeing them from purgatory. His evidence, in which twelfth-century laypeople's stories of appearances by the dead at such rituals long precede the thirteenth-century liturgical incorporation of measures to insure such appearance, suggests that lay ideas of the ritual's purpose shaped clerical practice; convergence of products when producers compete is something familiar in our own time.²¹⁴ Of course competition can also motivate self-distinction, and Taoist practice diverged from Buddhist in incorporating spirit mediums or their equivalent to channel the soul's appearance, but here too Taoists drew on existing lay practice, since Sung laymen, like laymen before them, would

²¹² Davis makes a similar point: "The conclusion that we must reach . . . is that even the mediation of local temple cults and lineage institutions by the monastery in the Sung must be seen as part of the deference of the monastery to the villages. . . (We) might conclude our discussion of the temporal aspect of the syncretic field by proposing that Sung Buddhism was becoming more similar to Taoism, in the sense that both monks and priests were increasingly defined by their function as ritual experts responsive to the tastes, and dependent on the needs, of their lay constituencies," Davis, *Society and the supernatural*, p. 218. I would qualify this only regarding the phrase "the villages," which could be read to imply that it was as communities that lay constituents used clerical services in the Sung. There has been too much loose talk in Chinese history about village "communities" and too frequent assumption that communities are primarily what villages functioned as. I do not think Davis means the sentence to be read this way, and his own evidence shows that laymen drew upon clerical services as individuals, as families and lineages, as non-kin groups constituted in almost any way, and sometimes as village units.

²¹³ On payment, see again the cases cited in Hymes, *Way and byway*, p. 145, and the Yellow Register retreat described in Davis, *Society and the supernatural*, p. 179: "It was offered for people who wanted to summon the dead. For each person it cost 1,200 cash." When a participating merchant's mother appears to him, follows him home after the ritual, and speaks with him, she tells him that she is able to speak to him in a normal voice "because of the effort of your paying the money at the sacrifice." Stories of Taoist or other ritual specialists sometimes follow a pattern common also in stories of doctors: they single out one man for his virtue in not charging his clients, or for not charging those who had little. This derives its meaning only from its departure from usual practice.

²¹⁴ Davis, *Society and the supernatural*, pp. 171–99.

often call on a spirit medium – a figure of more lowly status and education but also more firmly attached to a specific locality or god than Buddhist or Taoist clergy were – in order to reach a dead person whose grievance threatened the living.²¹⁵ In effect Taoists were incorporating, and also co-opting, one of their competitors for lay custom; and in so doing they gained a leg up on another competitor, the Buddhist monks who otherwise were offering liturgically similar solutions. The target was a single lay clientele, and this clientele had come to shape much clerical activity.²¹⁶

Taoism

We have come by natural steps to Taoism. By Southern Sung, building on new revelations and new textual traditions often founded in Northern Sung, the service of local lay clienteles that we have just glimpsed was indeed where the action was in religious Taoism. But here too an important story of Northern Sung state sponsorship lies in the background. Two imperial undertakings massively influenced later Taoism's texts and liturgies. One was Chen-tsung's promotion of new Taoist gods in the early eleventh century.²¹⁷ The Heavenly Letters to the emperor, discovered in the palace in the year 1008, have sometimes been treated as historical embarrassment, the deception of a foolish emperor by flattering ministers. Yet there is no certainty of bad faith for any participant, and if deception there was, it was irrelevant in the long term, as the deities, statues, and abbeys that began from these revelations were taken seriously by generations of Taoist practitioners to come. By decree, a Temple of Heavenly Felicity (T'ien-ch'ing Kuan) was built in each prefecture to celebrate the Letters. When, four years later, Chen-tsung's "Holy Ancestor" twice appeared to him and revealed himself as an avatar of the Yellow Emperor, founding deity of Taoism, the revealed ancestor was ordered enshrined in every Temple of Heavenly Felicity. The revelation gave

²¹⁵ This in fact in south China was a normal popular interpretation even of many cases of what we would call disease, which was what rendered spirit mediums such an obstacle for a state interested in getting the populace to seek medical solutions and consult doctors. See again Hinrichs, "The medical transforming of governance." Taoists here co-opted what the state had tried to suppress.

²¹⁶ On the Offering and Retreat as rituals for the dead in the Sung, see also Matsumoto Gōichi, "Sōrei, sairei ni miru Sōdai shūkyōshi no ichi keikō," in *Sōdai no shakai to bunka: Sōdaishi kenkyū hōkō dai-ichi shū* (Tokyo, 1983), pp. 169–93.

²¹⁷ For what follows, see Suzanne Cahill, "Taoism at the Sung court: The Heavenly Text affair of 1008," *Bulletin of Sung-Yüan Studies* 16 (1980), pp. 23–44; Sun K'e-k'uan, *Sung Yüan Tao-chiao chib fa-chan* (Taipei, 1965), pp. 71–92; Patricia Ebrey, "Portrait sculptures in imperial ancestral rites in Song China," *T'oung-pao* 83 No. 1 (1997), pp. 42–92, which uniquely and usefully places the events within the history of Sung imperial ancestral worship rather than the history of Taoism; and Davis, *Sung Society and the supernatural*, which is the best treatment of the connections between imperial Taoism at this period and the developing exorcist sects of southeast China in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Chen-tsung a Taoist genealogy even higher than T'ang emperors' claimed descent from Lao-tzu, and perhaps asserted legitimacy at a time when the Treaty of Shan-yüan with the Sung's northern Liao neighbor could be seen as weakening Sung emperors' claim to rule all of China. It also marked a striking shift (not permanent) from Buddhist-run to Taoist-run imperial ancestral worship. Temples of Heavenly Felicity remained fixtures of the official urban religious landscape right through the dynasty. But Chen-tsung also sponsored other Taoist deities, in particular the Black Killer (*Hei-sha*) (with his cohorts Chen-wu (or Hsüan-wu) and T'ien-p'eng), already promoted for legitimating purposes as a dynastic guardian by his predecessor T'ai-tsung.²¹⁸

Now the revelations beginning with the Heavenly Letters, and the idea that the emperor was heir to a Taoist deity, originated in the testimony of Wang Chieh, a spirit medium from Fu-chien, where he had studied with an Immortal who he claimed was ancestor to the imperial house. Wang had brought his knowledge to the court in the year 1007 and was now ensconced in the emperor's security office. The Black Killer had first revealed himself to the imperial house through the provincial Taoist Chang Shou-shen, active at court in the first two reigns; he was also (with Chen-wu) a focal god of Celestial Heart, a new Taoist exorcist practice that would spread across China in the eleventh century from tenth-century revelations to the Taoist T'an Tzu-hsiao in Fu-chien and the clerk Jao Tung-t'ien in Chiang-hsi.²¹⁹ The charter Taoist myths of the early Sung emperors thus gave first place to Taoist deities rooted in provincial and mainly rural, exorcistic or medium-based, healing-centered, and largely lay-serving sects and practices of fairly recent origins.²²⁰

This first entry of the new Sung Taoisms to court, however, only foreshadowed the splash they made there under the last Northern Sung emperor Hui-tsung. This most adventurous pro-Taoist imperial campaign went far beyond incorporating a few new gods into the official pantheon or imperial lineage: it eagerly drew advocates of new provincial sects to the capital and gave them honor and significant power at court.²²¹ The key decree, issued in

²¹⁸ On Chen-wu, see Shin-yi Chao, *Daoist ritual, state religion, and popular practices* (London, 2011).

²¹⁹ On Celestial Heart, see Judith Boltz, "Taoist rites of exorcism" (diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1985); Poul Andersen, "Taoist ritual texts and traditions, with special reference to *Bugang*, the cosmic dance" (diss., University of Copenhagen, 1991); Hymes, *Way and byway*, pp. 26–46; Davis, *Society and the supernatural*, pp. 37–41, 78–9, and *passim*.

²²⁰ The point is Davis's. See *Society and the supernatural*, p. 78. See also Michel Soymié, *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études* (1976–7), pp. 10–33, and Anning Jing, "Taoism and the reshaping of the Chinese pantheon in the Song," talk presented at luncheon meeting of the Society of Fellows in the Humanities, Columbia University, September 30, 1993.

²²¹ For the classic treatment of this episode, see Michel Strickmann, "The longest Taoist scripture," *History of religions* 17 Nos. 3–4 (February–May 1978), pp. 331–54; and "The Taoist renaissance of the twelfth century," paper presented at the Third International Conference of Taoist Studies, Unterägeri,

1106, ordered the provinces to send up “gentlemen of occult arts” (*fang-shih*) and recluses who could be of spiritual aid to the dynasty; a similar decree followed ten years later. The scouring of the localities that ensued is reminiscent of many other of Hui-tsung’s sudden projects. Presumably many of the practitioners the search turned up saw opportunity in plying their craft in the capital. In this period a master of Celestial Heart practice, Yüan Miao-tsung, was called to the capital and put to work on the new Taoist canon of scriptures that Hui-tsung was now sponsoring; the comprehensive collection of Celestial Heart ritual that he compiled around 1116 may have been taken into the new canon.²²²

But the central figure of this brief Taoist revolution was the Wen-chou practitioner and theorist **Lin Ling-su**. Gaining the emperor’s trust, Lin delivered a revelation that claimed even more for Hui-tsung than those before had claimed for Chen-tsung. Hui-tsung was now **Sovereign of the Divine Empyrean, Great Lord of Long Life, the Jade Emperor’s eldest son**, who on coming to Earth had delegated control of Heaven to his younger brother. All this was the political element in Lin’s declaration of the **Divine Empyrean (*Shen-hsiao*)** as a formerly unrevealed highest realm of Heaven. In 1117, as under Chen-tsung, each prefecture was ordered to build a new temple to enshrine the newfound god, this time a temple of the Divine Empyrean with a sculpted image of its sovereign, the emperor’s divine self. Most of Lin’s program did not persist, but he contributed something more lasting by enabling entry to capital and court circles by the other most popular new exorcist Taoism, called **Five Thunders**. The Chiang-hsi Taoist Wang Wen-ch’ing, whom Lin brought to the capital, was a master of this practice, which dates to late T’ang. Wang practiced for the emperor but also took private clients and pupils, including high capital officials.²²³ He was a founding figure of the Five Thunders textual tradition that was to proliferate in the course of Southern Sung.²²⁴

September, 1979; as well as “Sōdai no raigi: Shinshō undō to dōka nanshū ni tsuite no ryakusetsu,” *Tōbō Shūkyō* 46 (1975), pp. 15–28. See also Davis, *Society and the supernatural*, pp. 34–7. Davis’s interpretations of these events do not always parallel Strickmann’s, and generally I follow him more closely where they differ.

²²² If so, then according to Piet van der Loon’s researches it was an exception among the texts of the new Taoisms, as the canon project and the flooding of the capital with new practitioners seem to have been largely separate, and the canon was completed too early to have incorporated most of the new sects’ texts. Piet van der Loon, *Taoist books in the libraries of the Sung period: A critical study and index* (London, 1984), p. 44. See also Davis, *Society and the supernatural*, pp. 35–6.

²²³ On Wang Wen-ch’ing, see Hymes, *Way and byway*, pp. 147–70 and *passim*; Davis, *Society and the supernatural*, pp. 28–2, 54–6; as well as Strickmann’s work cited above.

²²⁴ **Most accounts treat Lin Ling-su himself as the key link in the Five Thunders tradition at this time. Davis disagrees**, and sees the place of Lin in this practice, as distinct from Shen-hsiao cosmology, as in large part **a retrospective construction**. What is clear, as both my own work and Davis’s have shown, is Wang’s active involvement in Five Thunders practice, both at Hui-tsung’s court and in the southeast in

Hui-tsung's pro-Taoist revolution was also anti-Buddhist. In 1107 monks were subordinated to Taoist priests in the state religious hierarchy, and 1119 brought the sternest and oddest anti-Buddhist measure since the Hui-ch'ang persecutions in T'ang: monks were not defrocked, but relabeled as lower members of the Taoist clergy and forced to take Taoist titles and wear special second-rank Taoist garb. This too lasted only a few years, and by the 1120s Buddhists were Buddhist again even in the emperor's eyes. The support and propagation of Five Thunders and Celestial Heart practice and texts, however, was one of the Hui-tsung's few new measures not rejected by state and locality alike after the north fell; indeed the teachings thrived in south China in the Southern Sung. Surely this is because, unlike most of Hui-tsung's reforms, these religious movements were not mere top-down affairs. For once, Hui-tsung's court had solicited something genuinely from below: sects already well established among a provincial lay clientele, increasingly including people of high official or social status. It is even unclear how much difference Hui-tsung's support made to the sects' further spread and success in Southern Sung; if Piet van der Loon is right, it did not greatly affect the status of their textual traditions vis-à-vis older, more established forms of Taoism.²²⁵ In any case, in Southern Sung we find Celestial Heart and Five Thunders, with other newcomers like the Ch'ing-wei rites, on offer to the lay market almost everywhere in the south.

I have said very little about the *content* of the new Taoisms. These were healers' sects, holding that most mental and much physical illness was the work of demons or ghosts who could be forced to name themselves and quit their victims. Central models of the new ritual were the courtroom and the jailhouse. Spirits were to be interrogated, with physical force if necessary, then judged and sentenced in terms modeled on real judicial language. Among the new texts were divine legal codes, listing offenses that spirits might commit and their penalties, again in words modeled on Sung penal law; their supporting gods were figures of martial force and physical coercion.

It is not strange to see such sects arising in regions like Fu-chien and especially Chiang-hsi, whose people were famed for contention and litigation in the Sung, and to see them spread rapidly in the Southern Sung, when law enforcement became ever more dependent on military personnel.²²⁶ We have

Southern Sung after his return home, and there is fair evidence of his textual contribution in the Taoist canon as well. On the last point, see also Judith Boltz, *A survey of Taoist literature: Tenth to seventeenth centuries* (Berkeley, 1987), pp. 27, 33, 47, 48, 194, and nn. 54, 251, 338, and 584. For an examination of a work that is probably an authentic record of a dialogue between Wang and a student, see also Hymes, *Way and byway*, pp. 148–54.

²²⁵ Van der Loon, *Taoist books*, p. 44.

²²⁶ Brian McKnight, *Law and order in Sung China* (Cambridge and New York, 1992), pp. 191–227 and 514. On Chiang-hsi's reputation for litigiousness in Song, see Miyazaki Ichisada, "Sōgen jidai no hōsei

seen complaints about a class of illegal but popular private legal advocates in just this region and time, teaching from lawbooks of their own to the authorities' dismay. In places and times like these, the judicial metaphor of the new Taoisms had natural appeal. Jao Tung-t'ien, Celestial Heart founder, was precisely a judicial clerk before his revelations. Meanwhile, the new rites' focus on individual or household distress, rather than on collective community benefit, for example (although their practitioners performed such traditional forms of Taoist rite too), suited them to the rising lay demand for hired spiritual service.

But whatever social level the new rites arose from, once they circulated at large they could be learned by literati and officials too, as something to dabble in or a real vocation. Some of the Celestial Heart and Five Thunders masters whose names survive (unsurprisingly, given the elite bias of our sources) were such men, who might use their supernatural powers to back their secular authority.²²⁷ The point applies to the clergy too: what the new movements contributed to Taoism was a new role, not a new stratum of practitioners. The role was that of rite master (*fa-shih*), exorcist healer and judicial defender of the spirit-possessed. He might employ a spirit medium through whom the spirit would name itself (anticipating mediums' use in larger-scale Taoist rites like the Retreat of the Yellow Register,²²⁸ and in function he himself was not unlike the mediums that long pre-dated him; but his supervisory gods, textual apparatus, and self-image as an official in a heavenly bureaucracy – very different from the images of mediums, Buddhist monks, or lay worshippers – marked him as Taoist. Some who took this role were practitioners of lower status than a "regular" Taoist priest, often lacking ordination. But others who took it on, sometimes for only a day, were ordained Taoist priests in good standing. Indeed, by late Southern Sung the Cheng-i school associated with the Celestial Masters of Mount Lung-hu in Chiang-hsi, the most "orthodox" of all Taoist schools, had taken much of Celestial Heart and Five Thunders practice into its own liturgies, reframing them as part of its heritage from the first Celestial Masters of the Han dynasty.²²⁹ Conversely the rite master, ordained or not, might take on other, older roles, leading the Offerings, Retreats, and

to saiban kikō," *Tōbo gakubō* 24 (1954), pp. 115–225, reprinted in Miyazaki, *Ajiasbi kenkyū* (Kyoto, 1964), Volume 4, pp. 179–305; in the reprint, see especially pp. 246–9. Miyazaki cites testimony to this effect from a number of sources stretching from early Northern Sung into Yüan.

²²⁷ Judith Boltz, "Not by the seal of office alone: New weapons in battles with the supernatural," in *Religion and society in T'ang and Sung China*, ed. Patricia Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu, 1993), pp. 241–305. The point, however, must not be carried too far. See Hymes, *Way and byway*, pp. 189–95, for a critical examination of Boltz's cases.

²²⁸ This point too I take from Davis. For a superb discussion of this and related issues, see Davis, *Society and the supernatural*, pp. 171–99.

²²⁹ On this, see above all Andersen, "Taoist ritual texts and traditions."

other rites long part of Taoism. In this respect the Sung picture is not that of modern Taiwan, where rite master is a distinct job, for a different and lower sort of person than is the proper Taoist priest (*tao-shih*). Here the roles have sorted themselves out among persons as statuses; in the Sung they had not.²³⁰ But the role itself was as a permanent Sung contribution both to Taoism and to the lay religious market.

Celestial Heart and Five Thunders, then, having thrived at court in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, in Southern Sung appear mainly in the provinces with a mostly private clientele. There are parallels here to the Buddhist arc from reliance on court sponsorship to dependence on local-elite and local-official patronage and a private lay market. For both, outreach to private lay needs became more and more prominent in Southern Sung. In the Taoist case the state's role changes in another way: the character and regional origins of Taoists who spent time in the capital changed from Northern to Southern Sung. In Northern Sung, Taoists came to the capital from all over the empire, half of them on their own, the rest at imperial invitation. Northern Sung capital stays were often long: the capital was often the long last stage of a Taoist's career. In Southern Sung, by contrast, over three-quarters of Taoists who came to the capital came at imperial invitation; most were invited for a specific ritual performance and left soon afterward; and most of these came from just two Taoist centers: Mount Lung-hu, the Celestial Master seat, and Mount Mao, center of Mao-shan Taoism. These were the Taoist branches with the strongest claims to antiquity and thus orthodoxy, and had certainly already received imperial support in the Northern Sung. But the narrowing of imperial attention, and capital Taoist activity, to these two schools also starkly regionalized Southern Sung state-sanctioned Taoism, because the two centers drew their personnel narrowly from the areas around their mountains, and the brevity of Southern Sung stays meant that even imperially supported Taoists could devote most attention to local and regional activities between capital junkets. The reasons for the change, from either the emperors' or the Taoists' point of view, are far from clear, but in its effects it surely amplified the movement toward local and lay clienteles that we have already seen.²³¹

If the exorcist role of rite master is one long-term Sung contribution to China's religious ecology, another is the establishment of Taoist rites,

²³⁰ On this point I differ with some of the formulations of Davis in *Society and the supernatural*, who does treat the *fa-shih* as a separate status or member of a distinct stratum, yet whose evidence I think shows again and again that a Taoist of any status could be a *fa-shih* and that a *fa-shih* of any status could take on the ritual functions of a *tao-shih* – and whose ways of putting things at other points in his book clearly acknowledge this. Davis takes up these issues most directly, though intertwined with other issues, on pp. 44–66. See Hymes, *Way and Byway*, pp. 42–6 and nn. 65–71.

²³¹ Hymes, *Way and byway*, pp. 175–81.

especially the Offering (*chiao*), as routine means for ordinary laymen to address, implore, or thank non-Taoist local gods. In south China to this day the Offering fills this role, which in liturgical terms cannot be taken for granted, since local gods have little place in the Offering's Taoist text or in Taoists' own view of the rite. The evidence for the Sung, let alone that for earlier periods, is not as much as one would wish, but it is clear that, by the Southern Sung, Offerings are celebrating or addressing at least some non-Taoist lay gods; and this does not look true before the Sung.²³² The change seems one more example of clerical outreach to lay need and demand.

Deity worship and lay religion

But what are "lay gods?" We have seen little of these so far, but they represent the most striking upsurge of lay religious action in the Sung. Valerie Hansen's pioneer work showed the extraordinary vitality of god-worshipping cults and shrines in the Sung and argued real lay initiative in this sphere, independent of scripture or clerics.²³³ On the last point caution is appropriate,²³⁴ but much is clear. God-worship of the kind Hansen explores was indeed available to laymen without Buddhist or Taoist clerical aid or mediation, though we have seen that they might also hire clerics for rites to these gods. Even when a religious practitioner – who need not be a Buddhist or Taoist – was employed at a god shrine, he served clients mainly concerned to worship, consult, appeal to, or thank *the god*, usually about a specific personal problem: illness, childlessness, the money, the examinations, or a soul's fate after death. Some of the gods that laypeople worshipped came from clerical religion, but more did not: most were simply dead human beings whose lives or deaths were somehow extraordinary and who, once dead, had come to be seen as powerful and responsive to direct prayer. Power and prayer might be reciprocal: people only prayed and sacrificed to gods they thought were (or might be) powerful, but sacrifice itself was sometimes thought to nourish the god and thus make or keep him (or her) powerful. Thus a god whose shrine for some reason had

²³² Hymes, *Way and byway*, pp. 212–16, gives numerous examples of Offerings presented to three local deities who in life had been Taoists and who are honored as Immortals, but whose character for their literati worshippers is clearly that of normal local divinities, and whose stories and miracles have been entirely stripped of the bureaucratic framework that characterizes Taoist gods and rituals. For an Offering to placate another set of three gods, clearly of non-Taoist and lay character, see Hymes, *Way and byway*, pp. 200–1. Davis, *Society and the supernatural*, mentions in passing examples of Offerings or Retreats in lay gods' honor on p. 175 (case in Hai-men) and p. 176 (Ch'üan-chou case). Kristopher Schipper and Florian Reiter have argued that this innovation in the use of the Offering takes place already in the T'ang, but see Hymes, *Way and byway*, pp. 246–9, for problems in their evidence, and for an account of how the change might have occurred.

²³³ Valerie Hansen, *Changing gods in medieval China*. ²³⁴ See note 240 below.

been neglected for a time might be judged to have lost its power through the neglect. But there were other ways of seeing things: gods never known before could make themselves known by shows of power – sometimes by making people suffer. Praying to such a being would seem wise; some shrines first arose in this way, when ill fortune was read – by a medium, sometimes by higher clerics – as the work not of a ghost to be exorcized, but of a god who deserved prayer. This implied that gods did *not* depend on worship for their power – but there is no more reason to expect consistency here than in any other human arena.

Such gods and their shrines had existed in China for a very long time, and direct lay prayer, not mediated by clergy, was not new either, to judge from older miracle tales. But gods, their cults, and their shrines multiplied in the Sung, especially from the late Northern Sung on. Hansen shows the spread of four gods in Southern Sung across southeast China, reaching national scale if the reduced Southern Sung territory is the “nation.”²³⁵ Others have focused on single gods and shown similar spread across space, sometimes trans-regional or national but often only local or regional in scope.²³⁶ Barend ter Haar, examining the major gods of Fu-chien in modern times, finds that almost all first received active worship in the Sung.²³⁷ Books of occult gossip like Hung Mai’s *Record of the listener*, travel diaries, inscriptions preserved in their authors’ collected works, and other sources make clear that by Southern Sung local and regional gods were everywhere, many of them new or newly prominent. They were not only “popular”: the rich, the educated, and officials might be worshippers or patrons. Lu Yu’s diary of his 1170 trip to Szechwan notes that he visited or saw twenty-seven different deity shrines en route and sacrificed at

²³⁵ On these four gods, see also Richard von Glahn’s important review of Hansen, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 53 No. 2 (Dec. 1993), pp. 616–42. Von Glahn argues persuasively (p. 639) that the gods who in later imperial times achieved national status were usually either of Buddhist or Taoist origin (and presumably promoted by their clergy), or were actively promoted by the state. On the other side it should be said, first, that late imperial tendencies are not necessarily germane to the Sung picture; and that in any case in lay worship these gods did not always look much like the versions that the clergy or state had supplied: Kuan-yin became female, and other “national” gods underwent almost as striking transformations in lay hands – and different transformations depending on the layperson.

²³⁶ For studies of individual cults see, for example, David Johnson, “The city-god cults of T’ang and Sung China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 45 No. 2 (December 1985), pp. 363–457; Valerie Hansen, “Gods on walls: A case of Indian influence on Chinese lay religion?”, in *Religion and society in T’ang China*, ed. Patricia Ebrey and Peter Gregory (Honolulu, 1993), pp. 75–113; Terry Kleeman, “The expansion of the Wen-ch’ang cult,” in *ibid.*, pp. 45–73; Paul Katz, *Demon borders and burning boats: The cult of Marshal Wen in late imperial Chekiang* (Albany, 1995); Hymes, *Way and byway*; Richard von Glahn, “The enchantment of wealth: The god Wutong in the social history of Jiangnan,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 51 No. 2 (Dec. 1991), pp. 651–714; Yü Chün-fang, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese transformation of Avalokitesvara* (New York, 2001).

²³⁷ Barend ter Haar, “The genesis and spread of temple cults in Fukien,” in *Development and decline of Fukien province in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, ed. Eduard B. Vermeer (New York and Leiden, 1990), pp. 349–96.

four.²³⁸ My own work has explored local elite – mostly literati – patronage of three local divinities in eastern Chiang-hsi.²³⁹ Terry Kleeman and Morita Kenji have shown the role Szechwanese and other literati played in the rise of the originally Szechwanese god Tzu-t'ung as patron saint of examination candidates.²⁴⁰ Literati were easily drawn to the **ouija-like cult of the Purple Lady**, since her answers, traced in sand by a chopstick wedged in a basket held by human hands, were written characters and even poems.²⁴¹ Finally, **literati and other local elites worked to win state sanction for gods of their own localities in the program of "enfeoffments" that began in the 1070s**. For in this arena, too, **state promotion plays a critical early role**.

Why the Sung state in the year 1075, under the reform regime founded by Wang An-shih, began a massive program to honor local gods is still not well understood.²⁴² Enfeoffment of gods was not new, but the scale was unprecedented: hundreds of gods were probably enfeoffed in the first year, over 10,000 by 1126. The simplest reading is that **a regime determined to expand the state into the private sphere wanted to take control of gods as well, as we see in Wang Ku's 1080 proposal to systematize enfeoffment ranks**. **But the result did not look like control: too many gods were enfeoffed too fast for real selectivity**. The state may have been seeking **local constituencies** who would then support its other measures; if so, it did not always seek carefully. Hansen has traced the official inquiry that by Southern Sung a candidate god had to pass, requiring local testimony to miracles, heard and certified by local and provincial administrators. Yet **in one early case in 1075, the state gave a name-plaque to a nonexistent temple and titles to local deities whose cult had long been moribund, based only on the outdated book-learning of the requesting prefectural administrator**.²⁴³ The case can hardly have been unique.

Tomo Mizukoshi argues that the turn to local gods grew partly out of a **genuine religious sense that the state needed divine aid after several years of extreme weather conditions – but was also partly a move against reform opponents**.²⁴⁴ But why the turn should have coincided almost perfectly with the **decrease of name grants and court support to Buddhist monasteries**, as if one were replacing the other, is obscure. **Were clergies the religious monopolist**

²³⁸ Lu Yu, *Ju-shu chi*, *passim*. ²³⁹ Hymes, *Way and byway*, especially pp. 76–146.

²⁴⁰ Kleeman, "The expansion of the Wen-ch'ang cult"; Morita Kenji, "Bunshō teikun no seiritsu: Chihōshin kara kakyō no kami e," *Chūgoku kinsei no toshi to bunka*, ed. Umehara Kaoru (Kyoto, 1984), pp. 389–418.

²⁴¹ See, for instance, Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, p. 186.

²⁴² On this program, see Hansen, *Changing gods*, pp. 79–104.

²⁴³ Hymes, *Way and byway*, pp. 101–5.

²⁴⁴ **Tomo Mizukoshi, "Sōdai shakai to shibyō shinkō no tenkai," *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 60 No. 4 (March 2002), pp. 1–38. The latter idea is supported by the fact that a rapid second expansion of enfeoffments under Hui-tsung coincides with the proscription and persecution of Yüan-yu partisans.**

equivalent of the “engrossers,” the reformers opposed in the economic sphere, skirted now to appeal to laity directly? If so, an unintended consequence was to make clerics more dependent on the same laity, as we have seen. The new policy disrupted a once limited state register of gods, not much added to in earlier Sung reigns. In the end, by making local miracle reports the criterion for state support, rather than whether the god was already in the state’s own registers or had even been heard of before, the new policy made the very idea of a stable set of centrally authorized gods irrelevant.²⁴⁵

The Southern Sung inquiry process also tended, yet again, to devolve authority to the meeting space of local administrators and interested locals. This made crucial players of local elites and powerholders, including literati.²⁴⁶ To this extent constituency-gathering may have been a real function (or at least goal) of the process, and it is notable that the Southern Sung reign with the most enfeoffments is the first, when the new emperor Kao-tsung struggled for legitimacy in the eyes of southern elites.²⁴⁷ Again this matches a withdrawal of support for Buddhism, as these are the two decades when the issue of ordination certificates stops. Here the court decides when enfeoffments will increase, though not whom to enfeoff; but the longer-term pattern in Southern Sung was more or less steady new enfeoffments, on a somewhat lesser scale than these most active periods, in a way that left initiative to the localities. As Hansen suggests, local administrators might now trade support of gods for local elite co-operation in other matters.

Why would elites promote particular local gods with such enthusiasm, and in such numbers, as to provide the demand that at least Southern Sung enfeoffment policy served? Local pride and status competition were one reason: once the state made enfeoffment a possibility, elites and other locals could compete to gain recognition for the god of their choice against other localities and against supporters of other gods at home. The state’s enfeoffments may actually have stimulated interest in local gods by gentlemen and others not all that interested in them before: in many places it is hard to find evidence of elite interest before late Northern Sung and much easier to find it afterward.²⁴⁸ But even where the state first drew elite attention to local gods, that attention could become real religious attachment. It is clear, especially



²⁴⁵ The point is Mizukoshi’s, “Sōdai shakai to shibyō shinkō no tenkai,” pp. 6 and 11.

²⁴⁶ On this, see Hansen, *Changing gods, passim*, but also the excellent and detailed recent study by Sue Takashi, “Shibyō no kiroku ga kataru ‘chiiki’ kan,” in *Sōdaijin no ninsbiki: Sōgosei to nichijō kūkan*, ed. Sung History Research Group (Tokyo, 2001), pp. 29–55, and Sue’s “What do inscriptions tell us? The discourse found in the records of temples,” paper presented at the panel on “The Genesis of Discourse,” ICANAS 2000, Montreal, August 27–September 2, 2000.

²⁴⁷ Mizukoshi, “Sōdai shakai to shibyō shinkō no tenkai,” pp. 15–21.

²⁴⁸ See Hymes, *Way and byway*, for one example.

in Southern Sung, that elites, like others, often promoted gods because they believed in them; the evidence of their worship of local gods, and the miracles gods performed for them, abounds in third-person testimony about local elites if not often in their own formal writings. In some cases the attachment of an important local family to a particular god was very long and deep, and enfeoffment offered a chance to promote (in effect) a **family god** – even an ancestor – to officially recognized local-patron deity.²⁴⁹

But a third reason could be economic gain. **Worshippers paid to pray or attend festivals at shrines.** Lu Yu judged one god's power (*ling*) by the taxes his shrine paid the state, for these reflected the income it earned from worshippers.²⁵⁰ Some shrines hosted huge festivals at which much money was spent and much wealth sacrificed. At the shrine to the Tz'u-shan god in Kuang-te prefecture, where 2,000 oxen were slaughtered at each year's festivals, worshippers needed oxen to sacrifice, which generated a market on the site.²⁵¹ Other shrine festivals (like those at Buddhist and Taoist temples) drew shopkeepers and merchants simply because crowds were there; thus **festivals turned into fairs, and major shrines into market centers.** **We should not conclude that merchants were the main patrons of the gods at such shrines, or the motor of their spread,**²⁵² the point is simply that there were chances for gain here, for merchants but also for **whoever owned the site of a shrine or could control it, and this might well be a family of wealth and/or gentlemanly status.**²⁵³ Here again we cannot see the market as offering opportunities equally to all: **the capacity of families of wealth and status to dominate the enfeoffment process and to gain control over shrines brought them new means of local domination.**

The growing arena of god cults and their shrines thus offered one more field on which to work out lay, religious, and other needs, again usually through money, to the advantage of those who had it; and the field grew from late Northern Sung on. From capital to countryside, **"societies" – *she* or *she-hui* –** arose to celebrate specific gods, and their members spanned the social scale. The name *she* itself raises an interesting issue, for what was called a *she* in China had **not traditionally been a voluntary organization devoted to a chosen god,** but rather the **classically sanctioned altar to the god of the soil,** together with

²⁴⁹ See, for example, Sue Takashi, "Bukken Hoden no Hōshi to Shōōbyō," in *Sōdai shakai no nettowaaku*, ed. Sōdaishi kenkyūkai kenkyū hōko dairoku shū (Tokyo, 1998), pp. 393–434.

²⁵⁰ Lu Yu, *Ju Shu ji*, 8th month, 13th day, in *Wei-nan wen-chi*, 46, p. 7a.

²⁵¹ See Huang Chen, *Huang-shih jih-ch'ao*, 74, p. 28a–b and 74, p. 19a–b.

²⁵² For an argument that merchants were the bearers of the gods who became regional or national in Southern Sung, see Hansen, *passim*; but see also the useful cautions offered by von Glahn in his review of Hansen, in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 53 No. 2 (December 1993), pp. 616–42.

²⁵³ Good on this point is Mochizuki, "Sōdai shakai to shibyō shinkō no tenkai," pp. 23–6.

its worshipping community, tied to it by living in the village whose soil the god oversaw. Some have suggested that the gods enfeoffed in late Northern and Southern Sung were displacing this older rural stratum of community-rooted agricultural gods. Something like this may have gone on, but the evidence calls for caution. The point is worth a digression.

Much of the proposed evidence of older-style, autochthonous, agricultural *she* gods in Sung comes from poems or essays rejoicing at the sight of happy countryfolk celebrating at the altar of the soil in their immemorial way. In this medium, gentlemen inclined to pastoral classicism may have called *she* any spring or autumn rite they saw among farmers. When one considers how many southerners were recent immigrants (most evidence for displacement of the *she* by new gods is southern),²⁵⁴ to imagine old autochthonous traditions of god worship among rural people is risky. We have no evidence that the gods worshipped at the village level by ordinary farmers, even before any new, expansive local cult drew them in, differed less or were less individual than the gods that in some cases replaced them. At any period the village-level god itself may first have appeared to a medium or other villager in a unique revelation. It may be that the worship of village-level gods, before the deity explosion of the Sung made more gods available, was less voluntary, more a reflex of community membership, than was the case with the newer gods. But to infer from poetry the uniformity and naturalness, let alone antiquity, of previous rural practice is dangerous. Nor should we assume that new gods uniformly occupied a new level of deity, the *t'u-ti shen* or place god, though the idea of such a level did spread too. Instead we should see the idea of the place god itself, especially the idea that it was one level in a ranked series, as one device by which some tried to order the shifting plethora of gods that now faced them. What we can certainly say is that local shrines were founded, their cults carried across space, and their gods promoted and celebrated in numbers that we have not seen before; and that this changed the religious world of ordinary farming people too.²⁵⁵

I have focused so far on Buddhism, Taoism, and local deity cults because these were arenas of important innovation in relation to the laity; but the three hardly exhaust Sung lay religious options. Charms, amulets, spells, and incantations, often borrowed from the clergies but sometimes locally

²⁵⁴ See Joseph McDermott and Shiba Yoshinobu's chapter on economy in this volume.

²⁵⁵ For some of the relevant literature on this issue and guidance to the rest, see Kanai Noriyuki, "Sōdai no sonsha to shashin," *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 38 No. 2 (1979), pp. 219–45; and his "Sōdai Sessai no shashin to toshin: Sōdai goson shakai no shūkyō kōsō," in *Sōdai no shakai to shūkyō* (Tokyo, 1985), pp. 81–118; and Sue Takashi, "Shashin no henyō: Sōdai ni okeru shashin shinkō omegutte," *Bunka* 58 Nos. 1–2 (1994), pp. 94–114. I am grateful to Sarah Allen for locating the last article for me. Sue's work brings the discussion to its highest point so far, but my doubts as indicated above remain.



or occupationally endogenous, circulated among laypeople and might serve any of the needs we have seen so far. A layperson with a problem or question might go to a Buddhist monastery, Taoist abbey, or god's shrine and divine the future by drawing numbered lots that yielded specific oracular pronouncements, printed on sheets numbered likewise and given to the appellant on presentation of the lot. Sometimes all a temple's oracle sheets were printed up and sold as a book, so that an oracle-seeker could divine a number by other means at home and go to the corresponding page with no clerical help. Even if printed and sold by a Buddhist monastery, such oracles often had no sectarian content, and they might aim their appeal at gentlemen or at ordinary farmers.²⁵⁶ Laypeople could buy or make small images of their own (even of gods of the state cult like the imperial Taoist patron Chen-wu), keep them at home or on their persons, pray to them by need or habit, or rely on their mere physical presence for protection. Scriptures, whether drawn from clerical traditions or from lay sects or cults, could be bought, kept, recited, reproduced in quantity in print, all for spiritual benefit. All these things were available for money and, whatever their origin, without the clergy's aid.

Steven Teiser has argued that the idea of the Ten Kings of purgatory, which as we have seen became the dominant image of the afterlife from the tenth century on, offered new immediate recourse for kinsmen's souls because one could address the Kings directly, without mediation.²⁵⁷ We have seen that the *Scripture on the loan of life* offered a theological justification, Taoist in form but financial in content, for offering paper money to the gods to aid souls. Spirit money was old, but it seems to be in the Sung that it became universal as a medium of divine contact,²⁵⁸ and it too could be used by a layperson unaided. Quite a different strand of independent lay scriptural practice – the ledgers of merit and demerit whose users kept arithmetical track of their standing in the spirit world by counting good and ill deeds – began in two Southern Sung texts, the *Tract of T'ai-shang on action and response* (c. 1164) and the *Ledger*

²⁵⁶ See, for instance, the *Hu-kuo chia-chi Chiang-tung wang ling-ch'ien*, a book of oracles said to represent the responses of a popular and powerful local divinity of Kan-chou in southern Chiang-hsi, and written by a military officer, Fu Yeh, c. 1225. *Tao-tsang* 1012. For a nicely illustrated example, see the *T'ien-chu ling-ch'ien*, a thirteenth-century collection from the T'ien-chu monastery in Hang-chou: Cheng Chen-tuo, *T'ien-chu ling-ch'ien* (Shanghai, 1958). On this collection, see the excellent article by Susan Shih-huang Huang, "Tianzhu lingqian: Divination prints from a Buddhist temple in Sung Hangzhou," *Artibus Asiae* 67 No. 2 (2007), p. 250. Huang shows that the illustrations of the oracles in this collection, produced by a prominent Buddhist temple, are as likely to depict Taoist as Buddhist practitioners and more likely to show no religious practitioner at all; and that the collection is oriented toward problems of degree-seekers and officials. (Fifty-five of the eighty-five illustrations depict robed and capped gentlemen of officeholding status.) For other works of this kind, dating roughly from Southern Sung to Ming, see Kristopher Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, eds., *The Taoist canon: A historical companion to the Daozang* (Chicago, 2004), pp. 1246–9.

²⁵⁷ Teiser, "The growth of purgatory." ²⁵⁸ Hou Ching-lang, *Monnaies d'offrande*, pp. 35–42.

of merit and demerit of the T'ai-wei immortal (c.1171). In the *Tract*, the god T'ai-shang (Lao-tzu) sets out the premises: humans' responsibility for their fate, the divine system that rewards good and punishes evil, lists of good and bad deeds, and the certainty of reward and punishment. The work draws on both Buddhist and Taoist sources but tells a lay audience how to master its own fate. The *Ledger*, product of the originally Taoist-oriented cult of a local god in Hung-chou (modern Nanchang), quantifies things with numbers of merits and demerits for each act, showing how to keep an account book of his moral balance. Surely the bookkeeping ways of a commercial economy underlie these texts, but again they offer a lay route to success and salvation without clerical help. No one knows how many Sung people read these books or kept ledgers, but their fit with the larger patterns we have seen is clear.²⁵⁹

I have argued elsewhere that the best way to see all this is to put lay religion at the center, to see "Sung religion" as the large and varied flow of beliefs, rites, texts, and artifacts that the laity lived among and chose from; and then to recognize several organized agencies – first, the state and the two clergies – that for reasons of their own tried to adjust, order, or even wipe clean this lay religious arena. Reframing all this as a religious market, one sees that the state, after the push its name-grants and its ordination policies gave to Ch'an in the Sung's first century, and after its failed efforts to establish a Taoist church, in Southern Sung largely let the lay market for clerical aid take its own course; and that after the stimulus its new enfeoffment policies gave to local god cults in late Northern Sung, their routinization again handed the ball back to local religious markets and power structures. The clergies, on the other hand, from early in the dynasty plunged more or less wholeheartedly into competition for the lay market.

It is worth asking whether the Sung religious market was freer, or more freewheeling, than that of the late imperial period. Richard von Glahn notes the contrast between the jack-of-all-trades gods of the Sung, any of whom the laity might ask for the entire range of possible aid, and the topically specialized gods (some of them the same figures) of Ming and Ch'ing.²⁶⁰ This may reflect the long-term success in monopolizing certain benefits or certain topics of prayer of some gods' supporters (perhaps exploiting more selective state patronage, which even after the brutal early Ming restriction passes looks less indiscriminate than the enfeoffment policies of Southern Sung). Anne

²⁵⁹ Catherine Bell, "A precious raft to save the world': The interaction of scriptural traditions and printing in a Chinese morality book," *Late Imperial China* 17 No. 1 (Jun 1996), pp. 158–200; and "Printing and religion in China: Some evidence from the Taishang Ganying Pian," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 20 (Fall 1992), pp. 173–86; Cynthia Brokaw, *The ledgers of merit and demerit: Social change and moral order in late imperial China* (Princeton, 1991), pp. 35–60.

²⁶⁰ Von Glahn, review of Hansen (see n. 236 above), p. 642.

Gerritsen has argued that the cohesion around shared rituals and religious assertions of community identity familiar to us from modern ethnography is not visible before the Ming; that instead Southern Sung religiosity "is based on . . . availability and diversity of options," and on a "fluidity and flexibility of the communities within which interpretations of the outer realm are shared." Does this reflect communities' later success in limiting the religious options of their members, thus resisting the corrosive and diversifying penetration of commercial religion?²⁶¹

Religion and the Learning of the Way

In this connection we should consider a fourth "organized agency" that seeks to change lay religion: the Neo-Confucianism of the Learning of the Way, which in principle rejected what it saw as the chaotic lay religion of its time. In the person of Chu Hsi and through his later followers, this moral-revivalist intellectual-political movement offered instead a puritanizing system of practice, which it analogized to the religion of classical times but fitted to its own age. The Learning of the Way was perhaps the force in Southern Sung society that most consistently opposed the religious market, though this was rarely effectual outside one segment of the *gentlemanly* stratum, or sometimes even within it. Ronald Po-chia Hsia has shown that European Puritans needed the state to enforce their religious views even on themselves, as they knew that free of coercion they might backslide.²⁶² The same problem may have faced the Neo-Confucians, who in Southern Sung could not call upon a state powerful enough (even if they had controlled it) to enforce their own visions, and who did sometimes turn in practice to rituals that they rejected in theory. Yet the theory is worth examining.

Chu Hsi based his alternative program on a cosmology largely naturalist. Spirits were temporary aggregations of material energy (*ch'i*) like any physical object, with no permanent, or usually even persistent, identity; they melted into the background *ch'i* of the cosmos soon after manifesting themselves, one more phase of the natural world along with rocks and stones and trees. The human soul and personal identity were similar: after a person died, the *ch'i*

²⁶¹ See Anne Gerritsen, "Gods and governors: Interpreting the religious realm in Ji'an (Jiangxi), during the Southern Song, Yuan, and Ming dynasties" (diss., Harvard University, 2001), especially pp. 324–9; the quoted passages come from pp. 324–5. See also Gerritsen's very important more recent treatment of Chi-an religious life across these periods in her *Ji'an literati and the local in Song–Yuan–Ming China* (Leiden, 2007).

²⁶² Ronald Po-chia Hsia, *Social discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550–1750* (London and New York, 1992).

that inhabited her and constituted her personality might linger a while before it dispersed, but disperse it would, and usually soon. All this directly opposed usual lay views of the spirit world. As one might imagine, the picture needed elaboration to be consistent with ancestor worship, which Chu wanted both to encourage and to refine. His cosmology had **little obvious room for continuously existing ancestors** and might have left **ancestral rites a matter more of reverence than of communion**, but one can see in his dialogues with students that on this issue he is continually pulled back toward ideas of persistence and physical reality for the spirits the rites honor, and must find ways to make these fit his larger worldview, which he does through ideas of temporary and conditioned persistence, or the **recondensation of ancestral *ch'i* at the moment of worship through resonance with the shared *ch'i* of descendants**. This may be one index in Chu's work of the power that common Sung religious views and practices had even within a movement that condemned them.²⁶³

But another index of that power is that Chu's movement offered point-for-point institutional and ritual substitutes for what Sung religion offered. For god-worship and shrines it proposed a redescribed ancestor worship, but also the **shrines to "former worthies,"** often heroes of the movement itself, that **Ellen Neskár** has explored.²⁶⁴ For Taoist and Buddhist temples, but especially for Ch'an monasteries and their personality cult of the master, it offered (as Linda Walton argues) the **local academy with the Learning of the Way teacher at its center**.²⁶⁵ For the scripturalized spoken words of Ch'an masters, with their implicit claim that Buddhas still lived today, the movement offered its own **"records of words" (*yü-lu*)**, embodying similar claims to a position in this age like that of Confucius and the *Analects* in his.²⁶⁶ For Ch'an and Taoist

²⁶³ For a representative selection of translated passages on spirits from Chu Hsi's collected conversations, see Daniel K. Gardner, "Zhu Xi on spirit beings," in *Religions of China in practice*, ed. Donald Lopez Jr. (Princeton, 1996), pp. 106–19; and see his "Ghosts and spirits in the Sung Neo-Confucian world: Chu Hsi on *kuei-shen*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115 No. 4 (October–December 1995), pp. 598–611. On these matters, see also Wing-tsit Chan, *Chu Hsi: New studies* (Honolulu, 1987), pp. 106–25; Koyasu Nobukuni, "Shushi 'kishinron' no gentetsuteki kōsei," *Shisō* 792 (June 1990): 132–47; Miura Kunio, "Shushi kishin ronbō," *Jimbun kenkyū* 37 No. 3 (1985): 73–91.

²⁶⁴ Ellen G. Neskár, *Politics and prayer: Shrines to local former worthies in Sung China* (Cambridge, MA, 2001).

²⁶⁵ See Linda A. Walton, *Academies and society in Southern Sung China* (Honolulu, 1999), and her "Southern Sung academies as sacred places," in *Religion and society in T'ang and Sung China*, eds. Patricia Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu, 1993), pp. 335–63, and **"Southern Sung academies and the construction of sacred space,"** in *Landscape, culture, and power in Chinese Society*, ed. Yeh Wen-hsin (Berkeley, 1998), pp. 23–51.

²⁶⁶ Daniel Gardner, "Modes of thinking and modes of discourse in the Sung: Some thoughts on the Yü-lu ('Recorded Conversations') texts," *Journal of Asian Studies* 50 No. 3 (August 1991), pp. 574–603; Robert P. Hymes, "Getting the words right: Speech, vernacular language, and classical language in Sung Dynasty 'Records of Words,'" *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies* 36 (2007), pp. 25–55.

meditation they offered “quiet sitting,” a meditative form from which any supernatural tie was removed.²⁶⁷

To see all this as Buddhist “influence” is to miss the point; these were in a way imitations, but also conscious substitutions. They amounted to a direct attempt to laicize religion: to displace the clergy entirely and make the range of experience offered by clerical religion available to laymen – at least to gentlemen.²⁶⁸ In attempting this the movement clearly responded to the efforts of clergy themselves, especially Ch’an monks, to offer laymen, including literati, that range of experience in specifically Buddhist form. In effect the Neo-Confucians made themselves competitors with Ch’an for the literati religious market (teachers too were paid). But by the founding assumptions of this particular laicizing effort, this move in the market, they had to reject both the real laicization of religion around them and the religious market itself, which in its radical variety and lack of controlling authority they saw as a degenerate mush. Yet they themselves needed printing and the commercial market in books; they needed the free-floating and often commercially born wealth of local elites for their academies and other local institutional projects; and they might not have survived without the partial state retreat that left space for the propagation of new ideas, texts, and institutions. Thus the Learning of the Way, however different in social place from the other things we have seen here, benefited from the same conditions that enabled the commercial religious market, and was, within one social group, one more agency of religious laicization.

The story of Sung religion, then, is not a story of secularization or of the “decline” of Buddhism, Taoism, or any sort of religion – far from it. Instead it is the story of a shift in religious power and initiative toward laypeople, a shift whose effects were equally felt in both of the clerical religions, as we have seen, but that one might argue expresses itself most purely in the two very different realms of local deity worship on the one hand and the institutionalized morality and cosmology of the Learning of the Way on the other. Both these realms lay entirely in the hands of laypeople apart from the clergies: hiring them when needed, in the case of the worshippers of local deities; and rejecting them utterly in the case of the Learning of the Way. In the former we see completely laicized but unquestionable religion; in the other, lay religious imitation in the service of a secularist moral vision. Both were creatures of the

²⁶⁷ See Rodney Leon Taylor, “Chu Hsi and meditation,” in *Meeting of minds: Intellectual and religious interaction in East Asian traditions of thought: Essays in honor of Wing-tsit Chan and William Theodore de Bary*, ed. Irene Bloom and Joshua A. Fogel (New York, 1997), pp. 43–74; Wing-tsit Chan, *Chu Hsi: New studies*, pp. 255–70.

²⁶⁸ This parallels Mark Halperin’s point on the “sacral” character of literati self-images in the Sung: see Halperin, *Out of the cloister*, p. 236.

social conditions of Southern Sung in particular. Commerce and printing obviously had their importance for both – printing perhaps more for the Learning of the Way, though we have seen that lay deity worshippers used print to propagate their miracle stories and tracts – but the Southern Sung devolution of state power was probably especially important: neither the Learning of the Way nor local deity worship could have flourished to the degree that it did if it had faced a state as controlling as the Northern Sung state sought to be. At two very different points of the social compass, **the Southern Sung was performing the historical experiment of leaving laypeople, rather than either clergies or state, in charge of fundamental arrangements of the relation between humans and the controlling agencies of the universe.**

ELITES, LOCALITY, AND THE STATE

In each section so far we have met a group I have called gentlemen, the gentlemanly stratum, literati, or the Chinese term *shih-ta-fu*, or simply *shih*. We have seen them as readers of the texts multiplied by printing, and as rueful observers of the improper books and nasty occupations that printing brought in its wake; as anxious commentators on vulnerable or powerful women; as patrons, interlocutors, and pupils of Buddhist masters, as funders of Buddhist monks and Taoist priests, and as sponsors of gods. Again and again we have seen an intellectual faction as promoters of the new Learning of the Way, proposing to reform a world in which self-seeking seemed to pervade all of life while learning had become shallow and superficial. The Chinese words *shih* and *shih-ta-fu* were very old, but from the beginning of the Sung their referent was new, or at least much changed. Change in the conduct and self-conceptions of the *shih* continued across the Sung, so that by Southern Sung one may plausibly argue that a way of life had grown up that in broad terms would remain the norm for Chinese elites into the nineteenth century. “**Gen-try,**” the word favored by historians of later dynasties, has not gained favor with historians of the Sung, though to my ear “**gentlemen**” more adequately captures their character, and the range of Sung meanings of *shih*, than the now more current “**literati.**” Whatever we call them, as a group they grew out of the wreck of the **old capital-focused and aristocratic elites of the T’ang;** they initially defined themselves as a group early in Northern Sung through their **relation to the state, particularly in the pursuit of examinations and office;** and by middle Southern Sung they were ensconced in the counties and prefectures of south China as a **locally rooted and largely self-ratifying elite,** defining itself on the one hand not through degrees or office but through **education and examination participation,** and on the other hand through **new horizontal social networks,** ranging within and across localities and ultimately national

in scope, that made gentlemanly status more a matter of mutual recognition than of state grant. In their most self-conscious manifestations they came to claim a cultural and quasi-political authority independent of the authority distributed through the pyramidal networks of the state.

Origins

We still know too little about where this new elite came from;²⁶⁹ the thinner sources that precede the book explosion long compelled the field to deal with scattered individual cases or to speculate plausibly about the group as a whole. Some portion clearly descended from officeholding or even aristocratic families of the T'ang, but they look like a distinct minority. Since the Sung elite would be heavily southern, the gradual peopling of south China in late T'ang and in the tenth-century interregnum (mainly in the lower Yangtze region and what are now Fukien, Chiang-hsi, and Szechwan), both by migration from the north and by natural increase based in rice agriculture, was a precondition.²⁷⁰ The move south was not necessarily easy, into conditions of life often harsh, on previously uncultivated lands and among "uncooked" aboriginal peoples of the south, and an unusually large number of huge multi-generation households in certain regions in the late T'ang and the interregnum may reflect the need new migrants felt to huddle against human and natural threats.²⁷¹ But for all that, migration continued quickly, so that important regions of the south often saw population increases of many hundred percent from middle T'ang to early Sung. Migrants move for a reason, and both recurrent war in the north and opportunities for land and wealth were likely motives. The increasing saleability of land after the dissolution of the equitable-fields measure made estate building through purchase more possible than it had been before. The sale of confiscated Buddhist monastic properties in the brief Hui-ch'ang proscription of the 840s may have first made large landowners of many men on the way up. The military governorships that dominated large regions of T'ang China after 755, and militarization of government even

²⁶⁹ A significant advance over older work cited below has been made recently by Nicolas Tackett's work. See Nicolas Olivier Tackett, "The transformation of medieval Chinese elites (850–1000 C.E.)" (diss., Columbia University, 2006). See also Tackett, "Great clansmen, bureaucrats, and local magnates: the structure and circulation of the elite in late-Tang," *Asia Major*, 3rd series 21 No. 2 (2008), pp. 101–52. The first third or so of the dissertation will soon be superseded by Tackett's forthcoming book, *The destruction of the medieval aristocracy*.

²⁷⁰ See, for example, Hans Bielenstein, "The Chinese colonization of Fukien until the end of T'ang," in *Studia serica Bernhard Karlgren dedicata*, ed. Søren Egerod and Else Glahn (Copenhagen, 1959), pp. 98–122.

²⁷¹ Satake Yasuhiko, "Tōsō henkakuki ni okeru Kōnantōsairo no tochi shoyū to tochi seitaku: gimon no seichō o tegakari ni," in his *Tōsō henkaku no chikiteki kenkyū* (Kyoto, 1990), pp. 311–59.

elsewhere, offered new opportunities to men of low pedigree, both through the inherently meritocratic route of combat itself and through civil posts won in the new connection channels of military regimes. All of these are routes that surely were taken by many, yet it is rare to be able to trace them for specific descent lines from T'ang into Sung.²⁷²

Nicolas Tackett's work on tenth-century elites of certain regions of north and south China has provided a new starting point for our thinking on the connections between the elites of T'ang and those of Sung, and thus for our understanding of the T'ang-Sung transition. Most relevantly, he finds that the capital-centered lives and attitudes that others have found for T'ang elites and Northern Sung elites respectively are characteristic of officeholding elites in the tenth-century interregnum as well. The strength of this aspect of elite culture at the time is suggested by the fact that they stuck to the capital-centered pattern even when the states at issue were small and the capital cities brand new.²⁷³ The court elites and bureaucracies of the last two of the northern Five Dynasties and all the independent southern kingdoms of the interregnum proceeded to supply officials to the early reigns of the Sung, and here it is easier to trace specific cases. Well into Sung these men may have maintained the geographically bounded networks formed in the regional regimes, mingling preferentially with others who had served the same state or came from its territory.²⁷⁴ If so, we do not yet know how soon such networks melted into the new national elite of the Northern Sung. But however varied in origin, the educated, gentlemanly stratum of the newly united empire, as John W. Chaffee's chapter on examinations shows, almost immediately began converting itself into a Sung officialdom through the new-style examinations,

²⁷² For a classic statement on one region in English, see Aoyama Sadao, "The newly-risen bureaucrats in Fukien at the Five Dynasty-Sung period, with special reference to their genealogies," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tōyō Bunko* 21 (1962), pp. 1-48. On other regions, see his "Sōdai ni okeru Kahoku kanryō no keifu ni tsuite," parts I and II, in *Seishin joshi daigaku ronsō* 21 (1963), pp. 21-4, and 25 (1965), pp. 19-49; and part III, in *Chūō daigaku bungakubu kiyō (shigakuka)* 12 (1967), pp. 67-110; "Godai Sō ni okeru Kōsei no shinkō kanryō," in *Wada hakushi kanreki kinen Tōyōshi ronsō* (Tokyo, 1951), pp. 19-37; "Sōdai ni okeru Shisen kanryō no keifu ni tsuite," in *Wada hakushi koki kinen Tōyōshi ronsō* (Tokyo, 1960), pp. 37-48; and "Sōdai ni okeru Kanan kanryō no keifu ni tsuite: Toku ni Yōsukō ryūiki o chūshin to shite," *Chūō daigaku bungakubu kiyō* 72 (1974), pp. 51-76. For studies of the origins of elites of specific prefectures, see also Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, pp. 65-75; Beverly Jo Bossler, *Powerful relations: Kinship, status, and the state in Sung China (960-1279)* (Cambridge, MA, 1998), pp. 129-34; Hugh Clark, "The Fu of Minnan: A local clan in late Tang and Song China (9th-13th centuries)," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 38 No. 1 (February 1995), pp. 1-74. Nicolas Tackett, "Great clansmen, bureaucrats, and local magnates," adds significant new support to the notion that the military governments of the ninth and tenth centuries were important in the formation of post-tenth-century elites, acting as major conduits for both social and geographic mobility.

²⁷³ Tackett, "The transformation of medieval Chinese elites," *passim*.

²⁷⁴ Nicolas Tackett, "The Story of Xu Xuan (917-992): Survival and transformation of the south Chinese elite during the tenth century" (MA thesis, Columbia University, 2002).

and – after a first period in which government was dominated by **personal associates of the two founding emperors** – became the dominant component of the imperial bureaucracy by early in the eleventh century.

The rise of a new broader elite to national standing through the examinations was also an **extension of examination culture ever downward into local elite society**. Chaffee's chapter illuminates this process, which continued into Southern Sung. More and more men with the relative wealth and leisure needed for classical and literary education answered the government's call for talent (or for enough literate bodies to staff a bureaucracy that in Northern Sung tended to grow) by taking up the examination curriculum and competing in the prefectural first stage. The broad establishment of prefectural and county schools under the reform regimes of the second half of Northern Sung and the significant broadening of opportunity under Hui-tsung, when for twenty years **the pyramid of state schools became a direct conduit into office in place of the examinations, accelerated the movement of local elites into the structures of selection and recruitment**. Yet even with rising degree quotas in Northern Sung and geographic shrinkage at the fall of the north, those taking part exceeded the supply of degrees and offices by ever larger proportions, as Chaffee has shown.²⁷⁵ Far larger numbers of men competed in the local examinations than could ever hope to gain a degree or office by this or any route – to a degree that needs explanation, for if men had seen the examinations simply as a route into office, then given the chance of failure and the expense and effort required, most of them were acting irrationally.

Several things may help to explain this. The **"facilitated degree,"** which eventually more or less guaranteed a second-tier degree and extremely low office to men who persisted, failed enough times, and reached a certain age, surely kept some in the game. **Examination study also fed on itself because those who failed often served as private teachers to candidates-to-be.**²⁷⁶ But the explanation with the most weight was proposed by **Peter Bol** some years ago: that as time went on the most significant element of status granted by the examinations was **the status of taking part**; that participation, not success, came to be an important emblem of *shih* identity.²⁷⁷ Insofar as this was true the examinations required only local effort, and success in relation to fellow locals, to do their status-confirming job; but this gets ahead of the argument. The point is that **a gentleman could rationally pursue the examination career,**

²⁷⁵ See his chapter in this volume, but also his pathbreaking *The thorny gates of learning in Sung China: A social history of examinations* (Cambridge, 1985).

²⁷⁶ For an argument that opportunities for teaching were crucial to the occupational and mobility choices of elite families in Southern Sung and Yüan, see my own "Not quite gentlemen?", especially pp. 59–60.

²⁷⁷ See especially Peter Bol, "The Sung examination system and the *shih*," *Asia Major*, 3rd series 3 No. 2 (1990), pp. 149–71.

knowing that while it gave only a small chance of political ascent, it ratified his and his family's membership in the educated elite of his locality and – since a national state had allowed him to compete – of the nation.

How large did the *shih* stratum grow? For sheer numbers we have only the records of the examination system to go on; and Bol's point that examination participation, not success, confirmed *shih* status is a good foundation on which to build an estimate of the numbers of men certified, by the examination system at least, to be *shih*. Bol in fact undertook an estimate in the same article, and with adjustment it offers the best number we have. The argument is as follows. We know from Chaffee's work that there were 400,000 participants in the prefectural examinations in the mid-thirteenth century.²⁷⁸ If the population of Southern Sung territory at this date was 65 million, the examination takers in a single year are already 1 percent of the male population.²⁷⁹ But of course one year's candidates are not all the living men who have ever been candidates or will be. Bol's analysis:

[L]et us suppose both that candidates stopped taking the prefectural test after failing five exams between the ages of twenty and thirty-five and that the 400,000 prefectural candidates Chaffee speaks of for the mid-thirteenth century were distributed evenly by age. Every three years 80,000 men would become ex-candidates. If all lived to age sixty-five there would be 800,000 ex-candidates and 400,000 candidates... Let us suppose further that the ratio of students to candidates, such as found in 1104 (79,000 candidates among 210,000 students) continued to hold when there were 400,000 candidates. We then could suppose a student body of some [1.06] million students. This becomes [1.96] million when ex-candidates are added... At this point we would have [between 5 and 6] percent of the male population involved in studying and taking examinations.²⁸⁰

Consider now that each student or examinee lives in a household and (since contemporaries spoke of "*shih* households" or "*shih* families") shares his *shih* status with it, and one is tempted at once to multiply Bol's number by five

²⁷⁸ Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning*, p. 35; and his "Education and examinations in Sung society (960–1279)" (diss., University of Chicago, 1979), p. 59.

²⁷⁹ Dividing 400,000 into 35 million gives 1.14 percent. I have not simply halved the estimated total population of 65 million to get the male population, because Chinese populations in late imperial and modern times are less than half female owing to differential mortality, and there is every reason to think this was already true in the Sung. (Infanticide is one factor but not the only one.) Thirty-five million is 53 percent of 65 million, a reasonable estimate of the male proportion.

²⁸⁰ Numbers in brackets are my corrections. An arithmetic or typographical error appears to have generated the number that Bol gives in the place of my 1.06 million above: he has 1.6 million, but 210,000 divided by 79,000 and then multiplied by 400,000 is 1.06 million. My 1.96 million above is a similar mathematical adjustment, as is the resulting percentage. The number resulting from Bol's operation is probably still too small: he adds ex-candidates to students (in official schools) without taking into account that the student population undergoes turnover too, though presumably more slowly than the examination-taker population. We need (but probably cannot attain) an estimate of ex-students as well. On the other hand, assuming a larger average number of examination attempt per candidate will produce a smaller total number of candidates, and vice versa.

(thus counting women too) and reach 25 or 30 percent of the population. But this forgets that more than one candidate or student often came from the same household, which immediately reduces the multiplier, probably dramatically. On the other hand, *shih* households were larger on average than the five or so members of the typical Sung household. We have no way of deciding the appropriate multiplier to count family members, nor do we know that *shih* status was always treated as shared across a household. Still, Bol's number makes it plausible that 10 percent or more of the population may have been *shih* or members of *shih* households. If we imagine this as the broad top of a pyramid of descending literacies, we will be impressed again by the effect of the printing revolution in Sung China.

We know, then, a good deal about the new elite once it met the Sung state, but too little of how it came to be. It is certain, however, that our familiar factors of commerce and printing-aided literacy were crucial from the first stages to the last. For the state's efforts to draw gentlemen into the examinations could not have spurred a growing *shih* stratum if the conditions for growth had not been there. Since *shih* status rested on education, which rested on relative wealth and leisure, it is hard to imagine the *shih* increasing their numbers without new wealth, and in the T'ang-Sung transition new wealth, apart from the sheer grabbing power of military force, largely involved the market: first the newly active market in land itself; then the capital market and other northern markets for grain, to which new landowners, especially southern rice producers, could sell; and with time, particularly in the south, the markets of the new cities and towns that sprang up in late T'ang, the tenth century, and the Sung. Wealth in China had long tended to convert itself into classical education, and while even a manuscript culture might allow this conversion reasonably speedily in commercial conditions where new demand for texts could draw out new supply, it could happen even faster with printing.

As we have seen, it is hard to know just how far printing spread before the Sung; but the fact that the dictionaries, reference books, and divination texts that Liu P'ien found in a Szechwan market in the year 883 seemed to him rustic and crude suggests that book printing, once it extended to secular texts, first served the newly literate and upwardly mobile with less easy access to more expensive manuscripts, who could not yet afford to care that their books were cruder than an established gentleman would accept. That printing continued to serve such men even after the new elite had become old we see in Sung gentlemen's reactions to nouveau riche readers like pettifoggers, doctors, and exorcists. When Chinese states began to print books themselves in the tenth century, and when the early Sung state took this up in force, the technological multiplication of texts became a permanent support for the new elite's self-reproduction and growth.



Elite change: Northern to Southern Sung

But the Sung elite's prehistory concerns us less here than its history and character in the Sung. Here we have first to understand change, and this will mean briefly recapitulating an argument not fully resolved in the field. A superficial examination of the sources for Northern and Southern Sung respectively would suggest strong differences across time: much ado about court, capital, and high officeholding families in the former period, and much about the lives, private doings, and attitudes of a broader range of elites in their home localities in the latter. In recent years, broadly speaking, two interpretations of this condition of the evidence have emerged.

Robert Hartwell in 1982 proposed that the crown of the Northern Sung *shih* stratum was a national network of high-officeholding and preferentially intermarrying families originating from all populous parts of the country but centering their lives and strategies on capital and court; and that this national elite network dissolved between late Northern and middle Southern Sung into the much larger array of local elites that had always lain below it in the prefectures and counties, which would constitute the "gentry" class from Southern Sung through Ch'ing.²⁸¹

My own 1986 work on the elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, followed Hartwell in finding change between Northern and Southern Sung, but conceived this not as the absorption of one stratum by another (since I found no firm social line dividing the two even in Northern Sung), but as a shift of strategies among the elite as a whole.²⁸² On this view the Northern Sung *shih*, or all of them for whom it was a practical possibility, pursued a strategy aiming above all at high office and at participation in a national, office-oriented, capital-centered, and court-centered elite network; Southern Sung *shih*, by contrast, while by no means abandoning office, aimed most at maintaining local status and participating in the elite networks of their counties and prefectures. This shift encompassed (and, as historical hypothesis, drew its evidence from) a range of more specific changes in practice: a quantitative (by no means absolute) shift from a much higher frequency of interregional marriages in Northern Sung to more typically short-distance, within-county marriages in Southern Sung; the change from a Northern Sung elite that, if successful in office, tended to migrate to the politically central capital region or the economically crucial lower Yangtze region and eventually abandon its original homes, to Southern Sung elite families who, though office might take them far away, almost always returned home, and who maintained their social identification with

²⁸¹ Robert Hartwell, "Demographic, political, and social transformations of China, 750-1550," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42 No. 2 (December 1982), pp. 365-442.

²⁸² Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, especially pp. 82-199.

their original locality; a Southern Sung upsurge in charitable activity, local-defense organization, private institution building, and religious patronage by elites at the local level, phenomena hard to find in Northern Sung sources; and the first spread among elites, in Southern Sung, of the idea and embryonic practices of the local lineage on late imperial lines.²⁸³

Beverly Bossler's important book of 1998, built on research both on Sung chief councilors, the highest civil bureaucrats, and on the local elite of Wu-chou in modern Chekiang, partly challenged this picture of Northern Sung–Southern Sung elite change.²⁸⁴ For Bossler there is considerable continuity between Northern and Southern Sung elite strategies. A tendency to preferential marriage between high officeholding families persisted throughout Southern Sung, as part of a general pattern of marriage by “matching gates,” in which level of office was a major criterion for ranking families in a hierarchy with its apex at the court. That marriage looked shorter-distance in Southern Sung was for Bossler partly illusion – for the supposed home prefectures of Northern Sung elites that look far from those of their partners were often not their real homes any more, as they had moved to the capital and made marriages with other de facto residents there – and partly an artifact of two changes, one historiographic and one historical. In the first place the Southern Sung sources that survive tend to be those that simply pay more attention to local matters, influenced in their own time by the private-gentlemanly ethos of the Learning of the Way and then further filtered by the similar bias of book collectors in post-Sung times.²⁸⁵ The same historiographic bias overstates other aspects of the apparent translocalism of Northern Sung and the localism of Southern Sung too, and thus masks continuity.²⁸⁶ In the second place the continuing growth of the *shih* stratum into Southern Sung, and the multiplication of localities whose elites achieved significant success in the examinations and in office, made it easier for high officeholding families, preferring to marry with their peers, to find peers close at hand.²⁸⁷ For Bossler, social change among elites in Sung was (1) encompassed by more important continuities, (2) gradual, and (3) conditioned more by the sheer growth of *shih* numbers beyond the capacity of the state to absorb them than by a shift in strategies.

²⁸³ Robert P. Hymes, “Marriage, descent groups, and the localist strategy in Sung and Yuan Fu-chou,” in *Kinship organization in late imperial China, 1000–1940*, ed. Patricia Ebrey and James Watson (Berkeley, 1986), pp. 95–136.

²⁸⁴ Bossler, *Powerful relations*.

²⁸⁵ It is not entirely clear on this view why these filtering hands of Southern Sung and after, which after all any surviving Northern Sung writings have had to pass through too, have left it so easy to reconstruct forms of elite conduct in that period that fit less well with a private-gentlemanly ethos – why, that is, a single set of filters has left apparent differences between the two periods.

²⁸⁶ Bossler, *Powerful relations*, pp. 206–7, *inter alia*.

²⁸⁷ Bossler, *Powerful relations*, p. 174.

Critiques of a “localist” interpretation of Southern Sung elites in contrast to those of Northern Sung have appeared also in important work of Hugh Clark, Ihara Hiroshi, Oka Motoishi, and others.²⁸⁸ Earlier Richard Davis had offered a picture of a highly court-oriented family in Southern Sung, the Shih family of Ming-chou, producers of chief councilors in successive generations, and certainly a counterexample to any exclusively localist view of Southern Sung elites.²⁸⁹ Bossler’s work, however, remains the most comprehensive challenge to a picture of significant change. To resolve the issues raised by the disagreement would require a whole series of local studies, all asking the same questions and applying like methods. No locality can be assumed “typical”: both Fu-chou and Wu-chou were special cases in different ways. Fu-chou was somewhat unusual in having strong success in the examinations and elite members in high office from very early in the Northern Sung, and this was followed by significantly less ascent to the peaks of the bureaucracy in Southern Sung. Wu-chou by contrast started relatively late in the production of degreeholders and officials, but produced more high officeholders in Southern Sung than did Fu-chou – a set of differences likely to produce different views of the state–elite relation. Fu-chou, though not a peripheral region, lay much farther from the Southern Sung capital than did Wu-chou, whose location almost in the capital’s shadow may have brought its elites culturally closer to the court than their equivalents in Fu-chou. In short, both are “atypical” in ways that bear directly on the issues at hand – all the more if in Southern Sung different prefectures and counties come to take on virtual regional specializations vis-à-vis both state and market. If Fu-chou’s region specialized in Learning of the Way

²⁸⁸ Clark, if I read him rightly, sees the weakness of the hypothesis in its underestimation of the strength of “localist” strategies already in Northern Sung, and his work is particularly relevant here for unearthing evidence that self-conscious lineage organization on something approaching the late imperial model is being practiced in his region of Fu-chien circuit already in the Northern Sung. See Clark, “The Fu of Minnan,” pp. 1–74, and “An inquiry into the Xianyou Cai: Cai Xiang, Cai Que, Cai Jing, and the politics of kinship,” *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies* (2001), pp. 67–101. For Ihara’s and Oka’s own recent review of the issues, see Ihara Hiroshi, “Emerging perspectives on Song local history: Japanese historiography and the integration of New Archaeology,” in *Middle period Chinese history and its future*, trans. Reiko Shinno and Ruth Mostern (Symposium of the Research Group of Historical Materials in Song China), compilation of papers presented at Harvard University, September 5, 2000, pp. 1–22; and Oka Motoishi, “Openness and exclusiveness: Personal ties among the elite of Southern Song Wenzhou,” in *ibid.*, pp. 23–52. For representative examples of the work Ihara and Oka are building upon, see also Oka, “NanSōki Onshū no meizoku to kakyō,” *Hiroshima daigaku tōyōshi kenkyūshitsu hōkō* 17 (1995), and “Sōdai chiikishakai ni okeru ninteki ketsugō: Public Sphere no saikentō o tegakari to shite” *Ajia yūgaku* 7 (1999), pp. 41–55; Kobayashi Yoshihiro, “Sōdai Bukken Hoten no Hōshi ichizoku ni tsuite,” *Chūgoku chūseishi kenkyū, zokuben* (Kyoto, 1995), pp. 503–26.

²⁸⁹ Richard Davis, *Court and family in Sung China, 960–1279: Bureaucratic success and kinship fortunes for the Shih of Ming-chou* (Durham, NC, 1986), and “Political success and the growth of descent groups: The Shih of Ming-chou during the Sung,” in *Kinship organization in late imperial China, 1000–1940*, ed. Patricia Ebrey and James Watson (Berkeley; London, 1986), pp. 62–94.

scholars and Wu-chou's region in high officials – to caricature differences that may be real – then neither is a perfect template for elites at large. In fact there would be no such single template, and regional difference should be built into our picture as something essential, not an afterthought. But this again must await more extensive local research.



This said, the two positions in any case share a good deal of ground. A crucial point of agreement is that the life of Northern Sung officeholders was capital-centered, and that this changed in Southern Sung. I see Northern Sung long-distance marriages as more real than Bossler does, because Fu-chou officeholders did not all abandon ties to Fu-chou, even burial grounds, when they established new residences elsewhere, and because they sometimes moved to the Yangtze/Grand Canal nexus, not the capital; but the point is that the marriage networks of those most successful in office centered on the capital, and that even with more cross-prefectural marriages in Wu-chou than in Fu-chou this is not true in Southern Sung. Hartwell's work and my own assumed "localist" practices in elites with little practical access to office in Northern Sung, a point of continuity with what came after. Bossler's view that "matching gates" was a continuous marriage principle is clearly right; I would add, though, that what counted as "matching" not only ranged over many independent criteria, as Bossler also notes,²⁹⁰ but also expanded its range in Southern Sung, even for high officials. Nor is there reason to challenge Bossler's argument that "greater numbers of people in the elite meant greater opportunities for community and for action in the community; appropriate affines could be found closer by, and there was a wider audience for the expression of status through temple building, charitable activities, and the like. Local life came to be celebrated for its own sake. And as a greater percentage of the local elite found themselves effectively excluded from office, their relationship to the state was altered as well."²⁹¹ The causality can also have worked the other way around, though, as gentlemen reorienting themselves toward locality, by the very act of expanding their local networks in the course of the twelfth century, brought new families into *shih* networks and thence into the examinations.²⁹²

Here an outsider to the argument might ask what difference remains. The answer is, first, a disagreement about the relative importance of high office in status calculus – which may well reflect regional variation – but second, and perhaps more important, the difference – also relative – between seeing conscious strategies in social and cultural change, and seeing the passive impact of changed circumstances on strategies more broadly continuous. In turn, to see continuity or change may depend on emphasis or on the level of



²⁹⁰ Bossler, *Powerful relations*, p. 209.

²⁹¹ Bossler, *Powerful relations*, p. 207.

²⁹² For an argument partly along these lines, see Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, p. 123.



generalization one favors. Presumably we want to recognize both change and continuity, both strategies and circumstantial pressures, if both are there.

It is worth considering a new approach to Northern Sung–Southern Sung change that could encompass the evidence of both sides in this argument, while moving beyond the “localist strategy” construct, which has raised a red flag when scholars have read it to imply dissociation from the state or the complete abandonment of national-level aspirations by Southern Sung elites. We may take as given that status is a culturally constructed thing. The new approach I propose begins with the proposition that gentlemen throughout Sung took part, in action and in thought, in two analytically distinguishable culturally constructed frameworks of status distribution, authority, and cultural value, which for ease of reference we may call two “cultures.” One was a “court-oriented culture,” in which gentlemen took part not only when they served in high office or appeared before the emperor at court, but also when they deferred to each other according to their level of office rather than by other standards, or when in their home localities they celebrated the emperor’s birthday in state-promoted rituals, or emulated the fashions of dress of emperors, empresses, and court officials in their own lives. The organizing assumption of the court-oriented culture was that authority was transmitted pyramidally from an apex in the emperor or at court, that this defined the mutual relations of all in the empire, and thus that status was distributed in similar top-down fashion. The hierarchy this culture built was simple and, again, pyramidal, and each member occupied one definable position in relation to others. A gentleman might be very deeply committed to the reality of this way of seeing status, authority, and hierarchy, which could supply one of the motives that drew him into the pursuit of office. Perhaps no Sung gentleman ever was a nonparticipant or utter nonbeliever in the court-oriented culture. But the relative weight that it held within different *shih* lives differed greatly from person to person, from context to context, probably from place to place, and, I propose, across time.

The other culture we may call, lacking a better term, the “*shih*-oriented culture.” Gentlemen took part in this when they treated their status as distributed through mutual recognition or affiliation; when they ranked each other first by their common membership as *shih*, then by their shares of a wide range of cultural, material, and behavioral resources supporting a gentleman’s place in society; and when they saw cultural or political authority as generated within and transmitted through the *shih* stratum itself, or through authoritative networks within it. Here hierarchies were ambiguous, multiple, debatable, and always under construction, because the resources on which members ranked themselves and others were plural. The relevant image is not the state’s pyramid, but a largely horizontal network of networks,

constructed as the sum of many dyadic ties: teacher to student, student to fellow student, in-law to in-law, examination graduate to co-graduate, county man to neighbor, provincial to fellow provincial, or member to co-member of a “faction” or “fellowship.” Office was one resource, and in some contexts very important – not because imperial appointment defined status, or office trumped other claims, but because what it carried that had meaning in one’s relations with other *shih* – income, links to power, ties to other officeholders or the court, legal and fiscal privileges, cultural dignity of a visible sort, and the capacity to define oneself ethically as aiding the world, according to one (not the only) old and culturally rooted view as to what category of person could do that. Here Bossler’s account of Sung social status is quite apposite:

It is clear that within Sung society, wealth, education, social and kinship connections, personal charisma, and especially official rank functioned to place some higher than others. But, first of all, different individuals possessed these criteria in varying degrees and combinations. Any calculation of social status was thus based on a complex equation, the constituent elements might well vary in value according to the observer.²⁹³

Exactly: but this was true precisely within the *shih*-oriented culture; and there were some *shih* who would assert, and some contexts or occasions when many *shih* would assert, that this was not a true or proper view of gentlemen’s relative standing, which lay instead in the grant of the emperor. There is no answer to the question which of these two was a real description of the Sung status system. Insofar as people thought and acted in the terms each culture offered, each was real.

There is partial but significant overlap between this proposal and Christian de Pee’s account of competing constructions of space and power in the Northern Sung capital, K’ai-feng. He shows the coexistence in tension of a hierarchical (read: pyramidal) vision of ritually inflected power and value, with the emperor as focal source, and a fluid, horizontally imagined space of commodity flows, status competition through wealth and the purchase of valued material or symbolic goods, and human movement not dependent on official standing. De Pee rightly refuses to see the imperial construct as mere survival and the commercial construct as predominant or somehow more real: since K’ai-feng was largely a consuming city, and since much consumption flowed from the salaries of officeholders and soldiers and from the imperial establishment itself with its dependent clansmen, women, and eunuchs, the commercial in this case depended on the imperial. Nonetheless he shows the power of the former, and following Stephen West cites Meng Yüan-lao’s reminiscing guide to Northern Sung K’ai-feng, *A record of dreaming of Hua in*

²⁹³ Bossler, *Powerful relations*, p. 209.

the Eastern Capital, as a written assertion of commercial/horizontal space. De Pee notes Meng's description of himself and his circle as *yu-jen*, "roamers," in "lateral movement . . . through continuous, horizontal urban space that disregards . . . the symmetrical order of discontinuous, hierarchical ritual space." Strikingly, this same word *yu*, "roam," often articulates horizontal personal relations in what I am calling the *shih*-oriented culture: one way to represent such relations in biographies is to say that one man "roamed with" (*yü . . . yu*) another. Hierarchy arises where one man "roamed after" (*ts'ung . . . yu*) another, but this is a lateral hierarchy in which both actors do the same "roaming"; the "roaming after" is voluntary, and one man is simply treated as more notable than or senior to the other. The sharing of the word across de Pee's contexts and mine is surely not coincidence.²⁹⁴

That Sung elites took part in both the court-oriented and *shih*-oriented cultures was, again, a continuous fact. My proposal, again, is that there was nonetheless significant change over time. First: across the dynasty, and decisively in Southern Sung, the *shih* culture grew in relative weight in elite lives, even for those who gained high office. For some it partly or largely displaced the court culture; for others it simply added new resources, by opening up channels of activity and thought alongside the court culture in which they still took part. In degree this surely varied by place as well as by individual. Second: in Southern Sung the *shih*-oriented culture became more and more explicit: individual gentlemen (and gentlewomen) were more and more celebrated for, and defined by, their acts as *shih* – scholars, founders of or contributors to institutions, performers of private charitable acts or charters of genealogy, organizers of lineages, leaders of society at large – as distinct from (though not necessarily to the exclusion of) their achievements as degreeholders or officeholders; and *shih* autonomy and authority came to be explicitly articulated and defended in a variety of ways. These not only are Learning of the Way phenomena, but also cross ideological lines among Southern Sung authors of commemorative inscriptions, epitaphs, and other normative texts. The gentleman *as gentleman* was more and more the focus of elite praise and concern.

One example of the cultural rise of the *shih*-as-*shih* from Northern to Southern Sung comprises a pair of extraordinary developments in the history

²⁹⁴ Christian de Pee, "Purchase on power: Imperial space and commercial space in Song-dynasty Kaifeng, 960–1127," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 53 (2010), pp. 149–84. See also Stephen West, "The interpretation of a dream: The sources, evaluation, and influence of the *Dongjing meng Hua lu*," *T'oung-pao* 71, pp. 63–108. I do not agree with de Pee that almost all Sung literati whose writings survive "assumed in their writings a civilized, civilizing center that grounded all meaning," if that "center" refers to the emperor. It was part of the point of the Learning of the Way to find that center in the moral gentleman himself; and other literati tendencies made analogous claims.

of Chinese political culture. Ou-yang Hsiu's unprecedented defense of political faction (*tang*) in the 1040s is one of the best-known essays in Chinese literature. He argued that virtuous men naturally formed associations with those like themselves, which the emperor should recognize and allow; and paradoxically that unworthy men – seen as authors of faction from time immemorial – were actually unable to form true factions because selfishness kept them from real unity. This implied that one could tell a virtuous man precisely by his loyalty to a faction. The essay is sometimes read as an isolated marvel, perhaps because it did not win acceptance from the emperor and indeed played a role in his faction's fall. It is less widely known that Ou-yang's co-factionist Fan Chung-yen (989–1052) offered a similar defense, or that essays on faction became a small subgenre of political discourse in the period. Ari Levine has studied the Northern Sung essays in some depth. Few were willing to follow Ou-yang in a literal defense of *tang*; but almost all essayists, even if denying that a *tang* could be good, still granted legitimacy to associations of virtuous men with each other at court. Thus the principle of Ou-yang's argument – that it was natural for men of virtue to form associations – commanded assent; yet in the court context he had not won respectability for the word *tang* and the historically suspect notion of faction.²⁹⁵

It is very significant, then, to find that men of the Learning of the Way movement in Southern Sung routinely called themselves “our *tang*.”²⁹⁶ Hoyt Tillman translates this *tang* as “fellowship,” and in one way this is apt, as the Learning of the Way movement was a very different social creature from the reformist court faction that Ou-yang had defended.²⁹⁷ Yet the tie to Ou-yang's argument would have been obvious to the Learning of the Way group, who imagined themselves descendants of Ou-yang's faction. With the discredit of the state-based reform model that Ou-yang's faction had favored, through retrospective association with Wang An-shih's New Policies, and with the blame falling on factionalism in most Southern Sung accounts of the disaster, what was a moral-reformist Southern Sung intellectual movement doing calling itself a *tang*?

²⁹⁵ Ari Levine, “A house in darkness: The politics of history and the language of politics in the late Northern Song, 1068–1104” (diss., Columbia University, 2002), chapter 4. For an earlier treatment of this history, see James T. C. Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu: An eleventh-century Neo-Confucianist* (Stanford, 1967), pp. 52–64.

²⁹⁶ Colleagues have occasionally suggested that this collocation simply means “we,” as it can in more recent Chinese. But one has only to search for *wo-tang* in the Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu digital database to discover that the list of its most frequent users consists mostly of the leaders of major intellectual or factional networks of the Sung or the Ming.

²⁹⁷ Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, *Confucian discourse and Chu Hsi's ascendancy* (Honolulu, 1992), *passim*. See also Tillman's chapter in this volume.

Here perhaps is what had happened. Ou-yang Hsiu and his allies had tried to import the model of a horizontal network of mutually ratifying gentlemen to court and gain full legitimacy for it there. This was bound to fail with any emperor, because Ou-yang's claim, that virtuous officials could identify their fellows, who would not include all officials, implied that **his faction could spot a virtuous man better than the emperor could, who had chosen virtuous and unvirtuous alike – and that they were entitled to.** By asking the emperor to accept this, he asked him to defer to judgments that gentlemen made among themselves. Surely no ruler, and no chief councilor claiming the emperor's authority for his acts, could grant this. **Ou-yang's claim to recognize a virtuous man by his loyalty to faction was a claim to define a gentleman by his horizontal network, not by status granted from above. It was almost an explicit declaration of the *shih*-oriented culture.**

It seems apt, then, that in Southern Sung Ou-yang's idea of the faction of virtuous men took root not at court but in the provinces, where it voiced the identity of a geographically broad, mutually ratifying network of gentlemen, not all of them officials – an entity never fully a **court faction**, but something closer to a **country party**. No provincial and private network, to my knowledge, had ever been called a *tang* before, let alone owned the name. The Learning of the Way group was claiming that it was possible to be a political alliance and “faction of virtuous men” while being simply *shih*, and by personal ties, not office or court presence.²⁹⁸ That a word long tied to court politics became the autonym for a new sort of elite sociopolitical organization in the provinces signals the rise of the *shih*-oriented culture. For this is what the Learning of the Way movement was: **a new model of provincially based, authority-claiming, and broadly political network that will rise in successive avatars in late imperial China.** If the *ku-wen* (“ancient prose”) movement from which Ou-yang's court faction grew was its predecessor (though not necessarily the first),²⁹⁹ **abortive because it tried to merge *shih* orientation**

²⁹⁸ The term could, of course, still be applied to court contexts, even occasionally in an approving way: see Chu Hsi's advice to a friend and chief councilor to be unafraid of forming a faction of superior men, quoted in Conrad Schirokauer, “Chu Hsi's political career: A study in ambivalence,” in *Confucian personalities*, ed. Arthur Wright and Denis C. Twitchett (Stanford, 1962), p. 181; and Wei Liao-weng's argument for the legitimacy of factions to the Southern Sung chief councilor Shih Mi-yüan, quoted in James T. C. Liu, “Wei Liao-weng's thwarted statecraft,” in *Ordering the world: Approaches to state and society in Sung dynasty China*, ed. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 343–4.

²⁹⁹ The first assertions of *shih* authority to define values on their own in the Sung did not come in the strictly political sphere and preceded the *ku-wen* movement. Linda D'Argenio has shown that Sung poets of the second generation from the beginning of the dynasty, such as Wang Yü-ch'eng (954–1001) and Yang I (974–1020), underwent a **“shift of perspective regarding poetry and its role in society . . . In this new perspective, no longer is the emperor the authority from which the didactic and regulating power of poetry emanates. It is rather to the *shi*, either as heir to the *ru* tradition or as expert in the literary traditions, that the poetic medium belongs.”** See Linda D'Argenio, “Bureaucrats, gentlemen, poets: The role

with court orientation, then the Wang Yang-ming movement, the Tung-lin faction, and the Restoration Society of the Ming, along with the Ch'ing southeastern academic networks explored by Benjamin Elman, are successors. Intellectual-cum-political movements that implicitly or explicitly assert gentlemen's authority as gentlemen apart from the state, based in horizontal translocal networks, not capital-focused status pyramids, and drawing large numbers of *shih* into their membership via teacher-student and other personal ties, will be a recurrent feature of the Chinese landscape from Sung on.

If the Learning of the Way brought "faction" downstairs from court to country, this was one, particularly odd, example of the general tendency we have seen in Chu Hsi: to reproduce at the voluntary and private, hence usually local, level (the level of the *shih*-oriented culture), the institutions of the Northern Sung state, especially of the reform regimes – for the idea of a *virtuous* faction was a reform-regime product too. We now know that a central ideological premise of the Neo-Confucians' own history of China, the idea of the "transmission of the Way" (*Tao-t'ung*) was also a downward import of a state-centered idea to *shih* contexts. It was long thought that the term was the Learning of the Way's own creation, even Chu Hsi's. But Cho-ying Li and Charles Hartman have recently shown that a "transmission of the Way" was first propounded by the early Southern Sung chief counselor Ch'in Kuei in an inscription celebrating an emperor, the first Southern Sung ruler Kao-tsung, as the recipient of the transmission, and the transmission itself as a passage from sovereign to sovereign. Chu Hsi's reworking of the "Transmission of the Way" into a line across the ages from teacher to teacher, independent of government, was thus a virtually seditious displacement of the emperor and court from an image originally their own; and Chu delayed publishing the preface in which he outlined

of poetry in the literati culture of tenth-eleventh century China (960–1022)" (diss., Columbia University, 2003), p. 227. For a still earlier period, Anna Shields shows in her important forthcoming book that the friendship circles of mid-T'ang writers asserted, both implicitly and to some degree explicitly, a degree of authority for themselves in cultural and perhaps even political judgment that strikingly anticipates certain aspects of Sung elite network formation and the *shih*-oriented culture. The groups Shields examines were – by the nature of the T'ang elite – small, and their efforts at self-definition and status assertion through writing about friendship were oriented somewhat instrumentally toward official employment (which may make them resemble the *ku-wen* movement's strategy, as exemplified by Ou-yang Hsiu's essay on factions, more than the later efforts of the Learning of the Way) and must be seen as tentative, experimental, and ultimately abortive so far as impact on the T'ang political and status systems is concerned. But the fact that a major figure in these efforts was Han Yü means that one cannot stop at saying that the efforts anticipated those of Sung gentlemen; one must also consider the possibility of influence. Shields's work shows that we need to think of the *shih*-oriented culture in Sung as assembled out of pieces some of which had been built or experimented with much earlier; this makes it one more of many examples of what we think of as "Sung" social and cultural phenomena that actually or probably began in the T'ang. See Shields, *One who knows me: Friendship and literary culture in mid-Tang China*, forthcoming from the Harvard Asia Center.

the new view for fear of being charged with *lèse-majesté*. Since the teacher was a crucial element in *shih* self-conceptions, Chu effected a theft from the court-oriented culture to the *shih* culture in recentering the “Transmission of the Way” on teachers.³⁰⁰

From the perspective of phenomena like these, elite localism in Southern Sung may appear “emergent” rather than as something with causal weight: a function of the expanding importance of the *shih*-oriented culture in gentlemen’s lives more than a motive in itself. That is, if ways of defining status and authority that emphasized inter-*shih* relations and *shih* judgments occupied more cultural space for Southern Sung elites, then if other *shih* were present in one’s own locality (and the stratum’s growth throughout Northern and into Southern Sung, as judged by participation in the examinations, made this true in ever more places), both status-seeking and culturally authoritative action could begin and even end at home. It might then need no deliberate localism to generate the upsurge of local activity, and its celebration, that we see in Southern Sung sources, but only a growing willingness to celebrate the acts of gentlemen as gentlemen, and a growing readiness of gentlemen to act in ways that could elicit such celebration. Rather than localism, one might speak of growing “privatism” or even “*shih*-ism.” In turn, striving for ties and recognition among fellow *shih* need not end at home; it could reach out to construct networks of mutual recognition and joint endeavor on a national scale, like the Learning of the Way “faction.”

Now, Sung elites had pursued such horizontal but translocal outreach from early in the dynasty, when they formed ties with those they met in the capital as examination graduates, or those they met while in office far from home; or when they joined like-minded men in a network like the *ku-wen* movement in Northern Sung. But that movement remained heavily centered not only on the examinations (which even the Learning of the Way tried to capture) but on the court, never developing the locally rooted apparatus that the Learning of the Way built in its private academies and its practices of local discussion and debate (*chiang-hsiieh*). A rising culture of elite association and status distribution, that is, came in Southern Sung to express itself in new ways both locally and nationally.

All this fits with Bossler’s picture of the social and cultural effects of elite expansion, quoted above. For without a proportionate growth of the state the sheer growth of the elite, in Bossler’s words, “effectively excluded from office” more and more of its members. That this partly underlies the rise of the *shih*-oriented culture is certain. In fact we may see the Sung changes as marking an

³⁰⁰ Cho-ying Li and Charles Hartman, “A newly discovered inscription by Qin Gui: Its implications for the history of Song *Daoxue*,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 70 No. 2 (December 2010), pp. 387–448.

epoch in elite–state relations in China. Scholars of the Six Dynasties and T'ang have given us the surprising picture of an elite that, while “aristocratic” (both in remaining atop society for generations and in defining itself by descent), was yet dependent on office to survive.³⁰¹ This makes sense if medieval conditions were largely pre-commercial. Assume that wealth then, even if based in land, needed help from the state’s systematic redistribution of society’s wealth to officialdom, via taxation and salary, to maintain itself for long at the high levels an elite style of life required. In that case an elite could not grow beyond the state’s capacity to give it wealth through office; for if it did, it outreached its means and grew down out of the elite style of life. What was new after the T'ang–Sung transition, then, was that maintaining an elite lifestyle through wealth and education over many generations became possible independent of the state’s extractive and redistributive machine. (Here again are the market and the printed book.)



To put this in the terms of Hill Gates’s analysis of Chinese political economy, the foundation of elite status had shifted, relatively speaking, from the “tributary” mode of production to the “petty capitalist” mode,³⁰² as commerce and especially commercial agriculture, aided by money- and grain-lending, teaching, good marriages, and sometimes an extractive approach to one’s neighbors (see below), now sufficed to keep some families – a small minority, of course – in the elite for generations with only an occasional shot in the arm from the fisc. The growing importance of the *shih*-oriented culture, then, looks based in inevitable processes – the natural expansion of an elite whose means of maintenance no longer depended fully on the state, and the formation of a new state–elite relation once elite greatly exceeded officialdom. Elite growth and the factors underlying it were heavily southern phenomena, so the new elite life and elite–state relations, with all their social consequences,

³⁰¹ See especially David George Johnson, *The medieval Chinese oligarchy* (Boulder, 1977); but the point emerges from much other work on the medieval period done both in this country and in China and Japan. The dependence on office is sometimes treated as itself an argument against “aristocracy” (indeed Johnson can be read this way), which on classic Western European models of aristocracy or feudalism seem to follow; but I think it works better to see the medieval elite as both aristocratic and state-dependent, and that parallels may lie in Byzantine or Russian history. Tackett, in “The transformation of medieval Chinese elites (850–1000 C.E.),” has shown the continued tendency of elites to define themselves by aristocratic pedigree right through the tenth century.

³⁰² Hill Gates, *China’s motor: A thousand years of petty capitalism* (Ithaca, 1996.) I believe that Gates consistently and dramatically overestimates the economic share of her tributary mode (the gathering of surplus from the population at large and its award to the state’s own agents and hangers-on, which should really be termed a “mode of extraction” rather than a “mode of production”) in late imperial times. This may be the result of gathering her evidence without much regard for geography, since in my view state extraction and redistribution remain more central to economic and social life in North than in South China, and more fundamental to the standing of northern than southern elites, through most of late imperial history. See the discussion further below.

have the peopling of the south and the shift of China's demographic and economic center of gravity at their root.

This is all true, but I suggest there is more to it. Southern Sung elite tendencies respond to more than elite growth, and some of these bring "localism" closer to the center of the picture. First, in asking why *shih* would turn increasingly to other *shih* rather than to the state in measuring their own status and authority, we must consider not only the growth of the *shih* but, once again, the relative retreat of the state. "Relative" is the key word, for the state was still much present locally in the Southern Sung, especially in its extractive role. But active efforts to transform the relation of wealth to local society, so central to the reform regimes of Northern Sung, were abandoned. This was not merely a natural effect of demography and economy but arguably a result of political failure and international events. The reform regimes might after all have persisted in trying to enlarge the state and bring private economy and private elites under control, had the Jurchen invasion and fall of the north not discredited their efforts, or had the military plight of the early Southern Sung regime not forced Kao-tsung to treat with southern elites as a virtual petitioner, a role reflected in his approach to local gods. And the retreat went beyond abandonment of grand centralizing reform. As we have seen, the overall tendency of Southern Sung government was to shift the site of decisions about taxation, order maintenance, and even distribution of honors (as in the example of local gods) downward to the interface between local administrator and populace. Quite apart from status and cultural authority, then, an elite concerned with the conditions under which it held its wealth and led its daily life would have been wise to focus on high office and the court in Northern Sung and on local position in Southern Sung.

But still more important in turning elite attention toward the local may have been a growing insecurity of local life. Southern Sung conditions made maintenance of wealth and even personal and family security a touchier matter. The indications are indirect but numerous. Brian McKnight has shown that in Southern Sung, rural law enforcement became steadily more militarized, suggesting that governments found maintaining order by civil means more and more difficult. McKnight suggests that the government felt less mistrust of the military than at the beginning of the dynasty, but this could be relative: declining trust in the power and will of civil officials may have made military men look worth a bet by comparison.³⁰³ Law enforcement faced a countryside that itself was increasingly, if unevenly, militarized, as local militias and self-defense organizations sprang up across the south in the course of the Jurchen invasions and often persisted afterward. Some were led by *shih*, but others were

³⁰³ Brian McKnight, *Law and order in Sung China*, pp. 191–227 and 514.

not, and the line between defense and marauding was fine. The state tried to keep private military forces in line and to dissolve them once crises passed, but to incomplete effect.³⁰⁴

Economically too the Southern Sung, especially after the mid-twelfth century, saw increasing local insecurity. Subsistence crises, structural to the life of poor and middling farmers³⁰⁵ but on the other hand aggravated by more frequent crop failure and dearth,³⁰⁶ were recurrent in many parts of south China, and while their effects were severest on ordinary people, there is no reason to believe they had no impact on elites.³⁰⁷ The state's shift of attitude against foreign trade in 1160 hit the southern sea trade hard, probably harming commerce and commercial income throughout the south.³⁰⁸ The shift was motivated by a dearth of coin, which also led the state

³⁰⁴ See Huang Kuan-ch'ung, *Nan-Sung ti-fang wu-li: Ti-fang chün yü min-chien tzu-wei wu-li de t'an-t'ao* (Taipei, 2002); and his *Nan-Sung shih-tai k'ang-Chin de i-chün* (Taipei, 1987); and for local elite-led militias in one prefecture, see Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, pp. 136–50 and 321 n. 46.

³⁰⁵ For an excellent summary of the endemic subsistence crisis for poor farmers in some regions produced by the structure of rural credit, see Richard von Glahn, "Community and welfare: Chu Hsi's community granary in theory and practice," in *Ordering the world: Approaches to state and society in Sung dynasty China*, ed. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 224–35.

³⁰⁶ See, for example, Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, pp. 23 and 157–67.

³⁰⁷ For this view of the Southern Sung economy as a whole I am indebted first of all to Paul Jakov Smith. See his "Do we know as much as we need to know about the Song economy? Observations on the economic crisis of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries," in *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies* 24 (1994), pp. 327–33, which originated as a state-of-the-field presentation at a panel at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Los Angeles, March 27, 1993. Smith cites my own work and von Glahn's on community and charitable granaries as elite-led responses to recurrent subsistence crisis, and notes the implication of Linda A. Walton's work on the charitable estates organized by and for *shih* lineages: that "the *shidafu* class as a whole was in economic straits as well." The last may overstate, as there is certainly plenty of evidence of *shih* families who were doing just fine in Southern Sung conditions. In the structural credit problem that von Glahn exposes, *shih* and other wealthy householders were often the beneficiaries, since if farming families were forced to "sell cheap and borrow dear," in von Glahn's words, then it was their better-off neighbors who were enabling this by buying cheap and lending dear. But Smith is still right to see in Walton's and other work the signs of economic worry for many elite families. See von Glahn, "Community and welfare," Robert P. Hymes, "Moral duty and self-regulating process in Southern Sung views of famine relief," in *Ordering the world*, ed. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 280–309; and Linda Walton, "Charitable estates as an aspect of statecraft in Southern Sung China." For support for the view of the Southern Sung rural economy as one in or nearing crisis, see also Liang Keng-yao, *Nan-Sung de nung-ts'un ching-chi* (Taipei, 1984), especially chapter 5.

³⁰⁸ See Robert M. Hartwell, "Foreign trade, monetary policy, and Chinese 'mercantilism,'" in *Ryū Shiken bakase shōjū kinen Sōshi kenkyū ronshū*, ed. Kinugawa Tsuyoshi (Kyoto, 1989), pp. 411–28. Angela Schottenhammer, challenging Hartwell on this point, sees a negative effect of state currency policies on foreign trade (specifically in Ch'üan-chou) as mainly a post-1200 phenomenon; if she is right, then this would have reinforced other earlier tendencies to economic decline in Southern Sung rather than served as one of its foundations. See Angela Schottenhammer, "The role of metals and the impact of the introduction of *huizi* paper notes in Quanzhou on the development of maritime trade in the Song period," in *The emporium of the world: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000–1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Leiden, 2001), pp. 95–176. Richard von Glahn lies somewhere between, placing initial causation

to turn toward an ostensibly silver-backed paper money, and the resulting threat of inflation must have made economic life less predictable as well.³⁰⁹ None of this means that local elites were in economic straits overall; as lenders of first resort and speculators in grain and increasingly complex currency markets, they were most able to turn to their own benefit economic changes disastrous to others. But all of it, including the opportunities, offered motives to attend to one's locality and look after one's economic fortunes, to cultivate ties with the local administrators and clerks who made tax decisions, and to guard the lower boundaries of elite status against interlopers.

The last point needs elaborating. If rich Sung families were like their late imperial counterparts and out-reproduced the less well off,³¹⁰ then while downward mobility would have been a worry for every elite family, once the elite was large enough any downward flow of elite sons, along with efforts to slow it, would clog movement up by others. That is, to prevent upward movement each elite family need only refill in the next generation the slots it already holds; and if it has more sons than slots, then those trying to move up from below will face stiff, experienced competition from sons trying not to move down. The wild card here is the notion of "slots," which has clearer countable meaning if elite status is an objectively limited good like office than otherwise. In the Sung, when wealth, education, and connections gave entry into elite networks, in principle "slots" were not fixed, but could increase subject to wealth and education's availability. Either of two processes – (a) growing wealth in society as a whole, or (b) a net transfer of wealth upward from non-elites to elites over time – could let the pool of the sufficiently wealthy expand without defined limit and allow both existing elites to reproduce themselves and new men to enter. This probably describes Northern Sung, when the elite as measured by examination participation grew steadily; and this may have rested on (a) above, growing wealth at large, indicated by steady population growth, among other things – though this could well coexist with net transfers of wealth from non-elites to elites. If the Southern Sung economy was harsher, then an economic limit on "slots" might have kicked in, and existing

where Hartwell does but economic decline where Schottenhammer does: "From 1160 onward ... the Song state reversed its previously favorable attitude toward foreign trade and enacted increasingly restrictive controls on exports with the explicit intention of stanching the outflow of silver. As a result, Song China's once-thriving maritime trade ... withered in the thirteenth century." Von Glahn, *Fountain of fortune*, p. 55, emphasis added. In fact it does not seem unreasonable that in an economy the size of Sung China, government restrictions that were probably very imperfect should have taken three to four decades to have a real effect.

³⁰⁹ See von Glahn, *Fountain of fortune*, pp. 52–5.

³¹⁰ See especially Stevan Harrell, "The rich get children: Segmentation, stratification, and population in three Chekiang lineages, 1550–1850," in *Family and population in East Asian history*, ed. Susan B. Hanley and Arthur P. Wolf (Stanford, 1985), pp. 81–109.

elite families would have strong reason first to resist or limit the entry of new blood, and second to turn to (b) above by reaching for a larger share of society's wealth. We may see indirect evidence for the latter in the **rent resistance movements** that spring up in the southeast in Southern Sung; and there will be more direct evidence below. But we might also expect to see evidence for the former – for resistance to new blood.

There is evidence that **the Sung *shih* elite did grow less open to newcomers over the course of the late twelfth and the thirteenth centuries**. Bossler finds openness, a **blurry boundary** between *shih* and non-*shih* at the local level.³¹¹ The issue deserves attention. All human categories have blurry boundaries in practice. We will see below that some pettifoggers described themselves as *shih-jen*, and the fact that judges rejected that description outright is one datum, not necessarily decisive; others might have accepted it, or why make the claim? One judge tells us that his own wish to treat “the gentlemanly sort” (*shih-liu*) with appropriate respect sometimes led him to extend the same to “those who (merely) affect the gown and cap of scholars” because of their “speech and countenance.”³¹² He regrets this, yet clothing, speech, and “countenance” must always have been important everyday clues by which people sorted out *shih* from non-*shih*. Another judge seems to have entertained the possibility of *shih* status in a man who was acting very much like a pettifogger, and reduced his punishment because of his employment in a county school. Significantly, in figuring out how to see this man the judge finally consulted “**public opinion**” (*yu-lun*).³¹³ This told him that the man was no good, but again this does not mean that others, outside the circles he consulted, did not consider this man a fully proper *shih*. When Ts'ao Shao, a doctor by training, became judicial inspector of K'ai-feng in the late Northern Sung, helped along by the reform regimes' encouragement of medicine, critics (surely of the opposite faction) objected that he had only medical skills and was “not of the gentleman's sort” (*fei shih-liu*);³¹⁴ but of course this cannot have been the only way to look at such a man, equipped with considerable education and holding a high position.

Lines between *shih* and still other categories of men, even when wealthy, might be easier to draw clearly. Huang Chen, governing Fu-chou in Chiang-hsi near the end of Southern Sung, judged the case of a County Registrar Yüeh,

³¹¹ Bossler, *Powerful relations*, pp. 189–201 and 209–10.

³¹² *Ming-kung shu-p'an ch'ing-ming chi*, p. 475. The passage is a bit obscure, but I read it: “Since I came to this post, I have always treated the *shih* sort with reverence and etiquette, while as for those who (merely) affect the gown and cap of a scholar, *sometimes (the above) precedent has been borrowed on account of their speech and countenance.*”

³¹³ *Ming-kung shu-p'an ch'ing-ming chi*, pp. 477–8.

³¹⁴ See Hymes, “**Not quite gentlemen?**”, p. 46, where Ts'ao Chao is misrendered as Ts'ao Shao.

who had died without heir. Yüeh was a civil officeholder and descended from the great early Northern Sung scholar Yüeh Shih, and in view of his descent Huang was unwilling simply to confiscate his entire estate as the law entitled him to do. Judging one line of Yüeh's kin genealogically most appropriate, Huang identified three sons in the proper generation. The first had already left to be heir to another extinct line; the third had given up study and opened a dyer's shop; the second was "roughly capable in calligraphy and with a general mastery of the principles of writing." Huang chose this second son as the only proper heir in the group, and found the dyer so clearly ineligible that he left him, alone of all the many candidates he considered, unnamed. What was clearly at issue here, though the word is never used, was *shih* status and who was appropriate to continue the line of a *shih*. Yet once again Huang is only one voice, while others might have judged the dyer a *shih* for his near descent from *shih*.³¹⁵

Only at the moment of examination entry, perhaps, did a man receive an effectively objective "yes/no" answer to the question of *shih* status. (A man who sought marriage with a *shih* family, or to study with a *shih* teacher, would also receive a definite yes or no; but he might get a different answer from a different *shih* family or a different teacher.) Sung society comprised a vast majority whom no one, including themselves, would ever have dreamed of calling *shih*; and a much smaller group (but perhaps not *so* small – perhaps 10 percent) whom anybody at all would have recognized as a *shih*. But at the edges of the smaller group there was, as always, negotiation, especially in a world – the *shih*-oriented culture – in which relationships and "public opinion" (the opinion, not always unanimous, of unquestioned *shih*) were finally what defined *shih* status. **Call the boundary, then, not "blurry" but sometimes negotiable and sometimes contested.** Neither prevented the *shih* from being *largely* a definable group. And when an elite worries about downward mobility, we may expect attempts to define or close the border.

Evidence for some closure lies in the **two surviving national examination lists, from 1148 and 1256,** which when examined closely suggest more **mobility in the generations leading up to the candidates of 1148,** which is to say in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, than in those leading up to 1256;³¹⁶ that is, in the late twelfth century and first half of the

³¹⁵ Huang Chen, *Huang-shih jih-ch'ao* (SKCSCP ed.), 78, pp. 36a–40b, especially 37b.

³¹⁶ In sum, the 1148 list suggests more difference than the 1256 list between those candidates whose three lineal ancestors held no office and those with one or more officeholders among the three. First of all, in 1148 the **officeholding ancestors are strongly clustered**, so that a candidate with one is disproportionately likely to have two or three; in 1256 the **officeholding ancestors are scattered essentially randomly among the candidates with any office in their ancestry** – which entails that they are scattered randomly through the list of candidates as a whole. This means that in 1148 the fact that one ancestor has or lacks

thirteenth.³¹⁷ We may see one way in which mobility could be resisted, at least within the examination system, in a judgment by Hu Ying some time after 1232 when he served as granaries intendant of Ching-hu-nan. A certain Teng Chieh applied to take the examinations in Shao-yang county, claiming that his family had lived there for three generations. This made Hu suspicious:

I felt doubt in my mind at this, and so in my decision I wrote: "Given that they had lived three generations in this county, they would have taken the examinations more than once by now; why then do we only receive this plaint today?" Later I received his testimony that his great-grandfather on down had worked only at farming, and that not until his father's generation did anyone study and try the examinations, but that in the Chia-t'ai period (1201-4) that man had been attacked by his fellow candidates, had appealed to the fiscal intendency, and received a judgment directing this prefecture to admit him to the examination; but that thereafter because of a series of illnesses and parents' deaths, things had been delayed until now. I issued a second decision: "How could forty years have been filled with mourning for parents and recuperating from illness, and how could the whole group of elder and younger uncles and cousins be mourners and recuperators? This claim will not stand up."^[318] And so I sent him to the prefectural school for guarantee. Soon the students at the school and gentlemen of two counties filed suit in a throng, attacking him for misrepresentation, but Teng Chieh continued to submit his requests. I take the examinations seriously; if I deny him entry, then I fear I will sever his route to merit and

office helps significantly to predict whether another ancestor of the same candidate has or lacks office, whereas in 1256 it does not. If one may assume that where office or its absence for one lineal ancestor helps predict office or its absence for another, there too office or its absence among lineal ancestors can predict office or its absence among other kinsmen – and that where not, not – then the 1148 list is statistically more consistent with the existence of relatively large numbers of degreeholders with no office at all among their kinsmen than the 1256 list is. For a longer and perhaps clearer form of this argument, see Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, pp. 273–5 n. 27. Note that I use the word "predict" in its purely statistical sense (as social scientists often use it), to indicate how knowledge of one fact about a case significantly increases (or not) one's chance to guess correctly another fact about the same case as compared to others. Obviously all the candidates at issue in a single list are drawn from the same year, so there is no chronological "prediction" here.

³¹⁷ John W. Chaffee has found an additional piece of evidence in the lists that suggest the same difference: a significantly larger number of young male household heads in the 1148 list and of deceased household heads in the 1256 list. On why this strongly suggests greater mobility in 1148, see John W. Chaffee, "Status, family and locale: An analysis of examination lists from Sung China," in *Ryū Shiken bakase shōju kinen Sōshi kenkyū ronshū*, ed. Kinugawa Tsuyoshi (Kyoto, 1989), pp. 341–56.

³¹⁸ McKnight and Liu read this section to mean that Teng Chieh himself was the object of the attacks in 1201–4, and that all that follows to this point concerns only him. As I read them, the preceding lines, referring to a first examination in the father's generation, make it likely that it was still a member or members of that generation who became the object of the 1201–4 attacks and obtained the order from the intendency admitting him or them to the examinations, and that the account of the delay since then concerns Teng's entire family, as Hu seems to read it when he queries rhetorically whether all the uncles and cousins could have been in mourning or sick at once. We are meant, I believe, to understand Teng Chieh to be saying that he is the first to show up for the examinations after a long delay since *members of his family* were first declared eligible by the intendency. Otherwise we have to believe that Teng is claiming that *he himself* has been delayed forty years in responding to the declaration of eligibility, and even Hu's incredulosity does not seem adequate as a response to *that* claim. I render the object of the 1201–4 attacks in the singular for convenience's sake.

fame, something much to be regretted; if I let him enter, then too, so long as the truth is indeterminable, I fear stirring an uproar at the examination hall.

Hu directed Teng to return to the intendency for an inquiry to establish that he (or his kin) had not in the last few examination years taken the examinations in Hsiang-hsiang county (presumably their former home); Teng did not, but obtained a new intendency order in his favor with just days left until the examination deadline. Hu refused him again:

He certainly has not considered that so long as his household registration remains unclear, not only will this county not dare to violate the articles of law, but the *candidates in the examination hall too will never be willing to admit him*; and that to provoke the anger of a multitude to achieve what he alone wishes cannot be of any benefit to himself... In the writ that denies him are the very words that care for him. I post this on the gates, and report to the fiscal intendency with the candidates' complaints attached.³¹⁹

The truth of this case is beyond our reach. Hu suspects that Teng has taken examinations elsewhere and is venue-shopping, but perhaps things are as Teng says. More important is the other candidates' determination to resist the addition of a single man to their examination pool, the *close-scrutiny examination admission* that this implies, and Hu's willingness to appease them. It is very striking to read that Teng's fellow candidates need to "be willing to admit him." Araki Toshikazu has noted other cases of *resistance by examination candidates to competitors' admission*.³²⁰ All this suggests that *the family guarantee certificate attesting good character and background needed for examination entry might, in crowded times, be a real filter against new families*.³²¹ The cross-stratum marriages that Bossler finds occasionally in Southern Sung Wu-chou might have been the one available door through which an ambitious new family could enter, and marriage choice itself a form of group gatekeeping – the "matching gates" metaphor in spades. Note that Hu assumed that a candidate presenting himself after three generations in the county simply could not be the first in his family to take the examinations, and so at first rejected Teng's application out of hand. *This experienced Southern Sung administrator expected to see the same families in the examinations generation after generation, and to see new candidates only from in-migrants already of shih status – a sign again of an elite tending to closure*. A judge in the 1120s, when new blood flooded the recruitment system through Hui-tsung's schools, could not have made this assumption.

³¹⁹ Emphasis added. My translation of Hu's judgment has benefited from that of Brian McKnight and James T. C. Liu in their *The enlightened judgments*, pp. 138–40, but goes its own way at many points.

³²⁰ Araki Toshikazu, *Sōdai kakyo seido kenkyū* (Kyoto, 1969), p. 146.

³²¹ On the family guarantee certificate, see Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, pp. 43–5; for *doubts as to any filtering effects of the certificate*, see Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning*, pp. 60–1.

Is there evidence too for growing efforts by local elites to appropriate wealth from others in Southern Sung? Comparison over time is naturally difficult given the evidence, but complaints of predatory gentlemen at home are so notoriously common in Southern Sung that Liang Keng-yao has classified home-dwelling elites in the period into two sorts: the “overbearing” (*bao-beng*) who bent local government to subdue their neighbors and enrich themselves, and the charitable “elders” (*chang-che*) who worked to relieve the needy and aid the community.³²² The categories approach traditional praise-and-blame history, but the activity they categorize is well documented in Liang’s work and elsewhere, and their flaw may be the assumption that they name largely separate groups. Liang admits that one man could fall into both categories, but does not fully explore what kinds of men the “overbearing” might include. Two legal cases he explores come from Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi.³²³ One concerns a Professor Wei, who, by suing his neighbor Hsiung Hsiang (falsely, in the judge’s view) for harboring thieves, has managed, through several proceedings and a series of private actions, to achieve Hsiung’s ruin, acquire much of his property, and cause the death of one of his associates.³²⁴ The other case is of a Prefect Tseng, who, by similar charges, by influence at the county jail, and by buying false testimony, has brought about the death of two of his opponent’s dependents. The pretext is a charge of theft, but again the goal appears to be the opponent’s property.³²⁵

Who are these men?³²⁶ It is usual in Sung judgments that the parties go by names or tag phrases that make it hard to identify them surely with people known elsewhere. In these cases, however, there is enough auxiliary information to say with a fair degree of certainty who the offenders are. Consider what more standard biographical sources say of them.

Professor Wei is Wei K’o (later Wei Chen), degreeholder in 1187, recommendee of Hung Mai (1123–1202) and Yang Wan-li (1127–1206), known for his filiality to his father, and eventually professor of the school for imperial princes in Hang-chou.³²⁷ His critiques of institutional abuses in

³²² Liang Keng-yao, “Hao-heng yü chang-che: Nan-Sung kuan-hu yü shih-jen chü-hsiang de liang chung hsiung-hsiang,” in his *Sung-tai she-hui ching-chi shih lun chi* (Taipei, 1996), pp. 474–536.

³²³ Liang, “Hao-heng yü chang-che,” pp. 489–91.

³²⁴ Huang Kan, *Mien-chai chi*, 32, pp. 1a–5a, 27, pp. 3b–6b, and 29, pp. 8b–10a; and for ease of reference, see also the reprint of the first source, Huang’s judgment itself, in *Ming-kung shu-p’an ch’ing-ming chi*, pp. 569–72.

³²⁵ Huang Kan, 32, pp. 5a–10b; and see the reprinted version in *Ming-kung shu-p’an ch’ing-ming chi*, pp. 572–5.

³²⁶ Elsewhere I have touched on how difficult – indeed impossible – the judge, Chu Hsi’s disciple and son-in-law Huang Kan, finds it to achieve justice or discipline the instigating party in these cases. See Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, pp. 206–7.

³²⁷ For my identification of Professor Wei with Wei K’o the evidence is as follows. Wei K’o is the only Fu-chou man of the Wei surname who is recorded to have held an office with the title “professor.”

the capital, we are told, got him demoted to administrator of Chang-chou, where he reformed the local custom of storing kin unburied in Buddhist temples: he built new cemeteries and funded burials for those too poor to afford them. Then he asked to return home to Lin-ch'uan County, where he cofounded the Society for Truth and Sincerity with seven other local gentleman, including the 1181 degreeholder Tung Chü-i, known for funding local self-defense forces in 1230 with his own money and for organizing the building of Fu-chou city's main bridge in 1225.³²⁸ Wei published collected commentaries on the Classics and a compilation of poetry of the Wei, Chin, and T'ang dynasties.³²⁹ His epitaph was written by his acquaintance the Learning of the Way scholar Chen Te-hsiu (1178–1235).

Prefect Tseng is Tseng Feng (b. 1142), who, while still young, compiled a genealogy for his lineage, and in 1169, at age twenty-seven, won a palace degree, eventually serving as prefect of Te-ch'ing-fu.³³⁰ Like Wei, he was praised for filiality, in this case to his stepmother. He coauthored a local history of the neighboring prefecture of Hung-chou, but was chiefly known for

His service occurred in the first years of the thirteenth century, shortly before Huang Kan served as administrator and judge in Wei's home county of Lin-ch'uan; thus "Professor Wei" was an appropriate way of addressing him at the time of Huang's judgment. Wei and his family established new residence in the eastern part of Lin-ch'uan: his brother's funerary inscription records that he built a library in "Lin-ch'uan's eastern cantons," and the two brothers are claimed retrospectively as natives by the local histories for Tung-hsiang (literally "Eastern Cantons") county, created in Ming from just this section of Lin-ch'uan. Huang Kan comments that if the depredations of Professor Wei's family continue, then "in all the east of Lin-ch'uan there will be nothing but the lands seized and the houses appropriated from others by the dependents of Professor Wei." See Huang Kan, *Mien-chai chi*, 27, pp. 3b–6b, and 29, pp. 8b–10a, and the sources for Wei K'o cited below.

³²⁸ On Tung Chü-i, see Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, pp. 174 and 321 n. 46b.

³²⁹ See Hsu Ying-jung et al., *Fu-chou fu chib* (*Kuang-hsü* ed., 1876), 49, pp. 34b–35a, and T'o T'o, *Sung shib* (*Chung-hua shu-chü* ed.), 415.

³³⁰ The evidence that Prefect Tseng is Tseng Feng is as follows. Tseng Feng is again the only man surnamed Tseng from Lo-an County (where Huang Kan's judgment places the case) who is recorded as achieving the rank of **superior prefectural administrator (*chib-fu*)** in this period. Huang Kan tells us that Prefect Tseng calls himself "a recently arrived sojourner" in the county, but Huang takes exception, remarking that in fact Prefect Tseng "is living where his parents lived before him." His mother's surname, we are told, is Tung. Now Tseng Feng's lineage had lived for two centuries in Yung-feng county in Chi-chou, west of Lo-an; but one member of the generation before his, probably his father, had migrated to Lo-an and settled at a place called Liu-keng. Tseng Feng in turn seems to have seen himself, judging by his works, sometimes as a Yung-feng man, sometimes as a Lo-an man. Thus the conflict between Prefect Tseng's claim to be a "sojourner" and Huang Kan's insistence that he is living where his parents already lived is perfectly explained if Prefect Tseng is Tseng Feng. Finally, Tseng Feng's new residence in Lo-an, Liu-keng, had for generations been the home of a successful officeholding family surnamed Tung – the surname of Prefect Tseng's mother. The move of Tseng Feng's senior kinsman (perhaps father) to Liu-keng was thus probably an uxoriocal marriage, which would both further justify Prefect Tseng's claim to be a sojourner – an uxoriocal husband did not have the same claim to belong to the place where his household had been established as a man actually from that place and making a normal marriage would have had – and explain Prefect Tseng's urgent need to establish property of his own in the vicinity. See Huang Kan, *Mien-chai chi*, 32, pp. 5a–10b, and the sources on Tseng Feng cited below.

his poetry. While vice-magistrate of P'u-ch'eng county in Fu-chien he got to know Chen Te-hsiu, who later saw to it that Tseng's works were taken into the imperial library, and whom at this youthful age Tseng immediately spotted as extraordinary. Late in life Tseng too gave up office and retired to his home county, where he built a study and occupied himself with poetry and wine, receiving guests who sought him out for his poems. His works would later be prefaced by the Yüan scholar and high official Yü Chi.³³¹

These men do not literally fall into both of Liang's categories, for we know of no local charitable activities on their part, though Wei's conduct in office in Chang-chou nicely fits Learning of the Way ideas of charity, and his friend Tung Chü-i was known for his local contributions. The point is that both Wei and Tseng are prominent gentleman-officials, with significant intellectual or poetic achievements to their credit, with connections to national intellectual and poetic figures in Wei's case, and to the networks of the Learning of the Way through Chen Te-hsiu in both cases. Yet they emerge from Huang's judgments as **fierce fighters in local property struggles**, striving to expand their wealth and power, and none too choosy about methods. We need not accept Huang Kan's (1152–1221) view of them as virtual judicial murderers – for who knows what in Huang's own position made him see the cases as he did? – to see that they were engaged in violent local battles for property and position. Such battles run through Huang Kan's judgments and many of those in the surviving Sung casebook, the *Collection of lucid and equitable judgments*. Given the **obstacles to identifying parties** – **only the coincidence of years of intensive work in Fu-chou sources has allowed me to identify Wei and Tseng from scattered clues** – many other men of like prominence must figure in Sung judgments, caught in similar rough struggles over property and power at home.³³²

³³¹ See Chu K'uei-chang et al., *Lo-an hsien chih* (*T'ung-chih* ed., 1871), 8, p. 10b; Hsu Ying-jung et al., 59, p. 5b; Yü Chi, *Tao-yüan hsiieh-ku lu* (*Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'uan*, first compilation), 34, pp. 3a–4a; and for the crucial materials that establish the move to Lo-an in Tseng's father's generation and other points in his background that support the identification with Prefect Tseng, see the genealogy preface in Tseng Feng, *Yüan-tu chi* (SKCSCP ed., second collection), 17, pp. 1a–2b, to which, however, exaggerated data on the family's degreeholding have been added, probably in the Ming compiling of the present edition of the collected works; the more accurate version of the genealogy preface preserved in the *Tseng-shih tsu-p'u* (Taichung, 1966) in the collection of the C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University; the preface to the genealogy of a separate Tseng lineage in Wu Ch'eng, *Wen-chung kung chi* (SKCSCP ed., second collection), 32, pp. 5a–6b; and the funerary inscription of Tseng Yeh in Wu Ch'eng, 39, pp. 15b–17a.

³³² Indeed an antagonist in one of Huang Kan's other judgments, **Tseng Wei**, is (1) a descendant of the high Northern Sung official Tseng Kung's brother Tseng Tsai; (2) the son of the poet Tseng Chi-li who traveled with Chang Shih and Chu Hsi; (3) an acquaintance of Chu's himself (in 1194 Chu prefaced Tseng Wei's edition of his father Tseng Chi-li's collected works); and (4) a twenty-year friend of Huang Kan, who therefore tried unsuccessfully to recuse himself from Tseng's case. There is no violence this

The men who make Southern Sung legal cases exciting reading need not be an understratum of non-*shih* elites working outside the law and reaching for wealth in lieu of status; they are often *shih* themselves, working inside the law when that works but otherwise outside it, and reaching for wealth and status together. They are doing as we might expect members of an established elite to do in tight economic conditions, worsening security, and intensified competition for elite membership. In such conditions the man who did not look after things at home and form ties of mutual support there would be foolish; and networking (Wei's Society for Truth and Sincerity, Tseng's visitors for wine and poetry) is prominent in both men's formal biographies. There is much room for regional variation in all this, and the lower Yangtze region may have been less affected by ill economic winds than the rest of the south,³³³ but one recalls that Ch'en Liang, in Bossler's Wu-chou, spent time in jail over a legal dispute. There was a dark underbelly to *shih* life in Southern Sung of which we see only glimpses. If one imagines state and local elite collaborating in local governance, as may have been the case in later imperial times,³³⁴ then the Southern Sung statesman Chou Pi-ta's (1126–1204) remark that a county was very difficult to govern because it had many *shih* lineages may mystify; but it makes perfect sense against the background of what we have just seen.³³⁵

In sum, factors beyond the growth of *shih* numbers – the relative retreat of the state and the descent of the crucial site of administration to the interface between local administrator and populace, weakening order in the countryside and accompanying rural militarization, and slowing growth or stagnation

time, but Huang Kan finds his friend Tseng to have falsified evidence in order to obtain the property of his close kinsman and fend off another buyer. See Huang Kan, *Mien-chai chi*, 32, pp. 13b–19a, and the reprinted version in *Ming-kung shu-p'ian ch'ing-ming chi*, pp. 578–80.

³³³ Hartwell found decline after 1200 – a somewhat later benchmark, to be sure – in all macroregions but the lower Yangtze (see Hartwell, “Demographic, political, and social transformations,” pp. 368 and 375), and Li Bozhong finds steady growth in Chiang-nan (in the narrow, late imperial sense of the term, referring to the Yangtze delta region, not the Sung sense, which referred either to all of China south of the Yangtze or to the two circuits of Chiang-hsi, closely equivalent to modern Jiangxi, and Chiang-tung, encompassing much of modern Anhui and some of Jiangsu) essentially from Song through Ch'ing, in his “Was there a ‘fourteenth-century turning point’? Population, land, technology, and farm management,” in *The Sung–Yuan–Ming transition in Chinese history*, ed. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, MA, 2003), pp. 135–75.

³³⁴ Paul Smith, in his introduction to *The Sung–Yuan–Ming transition*, persuasively argues that the Ch'ing solved the problem of state–elite relations and the associated problems of local governance to a degree and in ways unparalleled in Sung, Yüan, or Ming. See Smith, “Introduction: Problematising the Song–Yuan–Ming transition,” in *The Sung–Yuan–Ming transition in Chinese history*, ed. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 31–4.

³³⁵ Chou Pi-ta, *Wen-chung chi* (SKCSCP ed., 2nd collection), 90, p. 2b, in his “Epitaph of the *tso ch'ao-ch'ing ta-fu* Mr. Wang,” cited in Liang Keng-yao, “Hao-heng yü chang-che: Nan-Sung kuan-hu yü shih-jen chü-hsiang de liang chung hsiang-hsiang,” p. 528 n. 3.



economically – made it reasonable for Southern Sung elites to focus anew on local life and on guarding property and status, shoring up the lower boundaries of their group against the would-be upwardly mobile, and reaching for a greater share of local wealth at the expense of non-elite neighbors. Two distinct processes, I have proposed, generate something like “elite localism” in Southern Sung. One is the relative cultural shift toward *shih* networks as locus and arbiter of elite status and culture, a shift that is not inherently localist but generates rich local networks and cultural endeavors alongside translocal ones; this shift may form a continuous arc from Northern through Southern Sung. The other is an economic environment that makes local life less secure and more conflictual and thus puts a premium on elite attention to the local. If the shift toward the *shih*-oriented culture was a natural outcome of long-term changes that made an elite life available without the state’s gift of status and wealth – the peopling of the south and the commercial and printing revolutions of the T’ang–Sung transition – the further factors that specifically promoted localism were special to Southern Sung, and as much the fruit of contingent international circumstances (Jurchen conquest, the interruption of foreign trade) as of long-term Chinese historical trends. But together, long-term historical tendency and contingent Southern Sung circumstance shaped the elite culture that emerged in Southern Sung; and that culture is in many ways the recognizable ancestor of the elite culture of the rest of the late imperial period.

More on shih boundaries

What can we know about the “would-be upwardly mobile” against whose entry the Southern Sung *shih* stratum seems to have shored up its lower boundaries? Not enough, surely; but as we have seen, elements of an immediately lower (and perhaps broader) stratum are visible in the new literate occupations we have met in the sections on printing and religion: occupational physicians, pettifoggers and “litigation masters,” and new religious practitioners like the rite masters of the Celestial Heart and Five Thunders sects. All were new in the Sung, judging at least by our sources; all based their work in texts that were usually new as well; all but physicians are loudly complained of by literati witnesses, more loudly in Southern Sung; and physicians too, if practicing as an occupation instead of as an occasional aid to family and friends within an otherwise scholarly, official, or gentlemanly life, are regularly treated (in accounts by *gentlemen*) as socially quite distinct from *shih* themselves, even if gentlemanly discourse about them is ambivalent rather than always unfriendly. For pettifoggers and rite masters one can show connections to government clerks: pettifoggers sometimes came from clerkly families, while the Celestial Heart

founder Jao Tung-t'ien was a judicial clerk himself, and the texts of both the Celestial Heart and Five Thunders sects are drenched with the sort of legal and penal language that clerks dealt with every day, that pettifoggers had to use in their work as advocates, and that "litigation masters" taught. Physicians' language, of course, was different; but what made them like rite masters and litigation masters was not only that they offered text-based services to private households and individuals for money, but that all three *gathered students or disciples to pass on their learning* and taught them using texts, often of their own creation or with their own commentaries. This, of course, also made them similar to *shih*, for whom, even apart from the leading teacher-intellectuals, teaching was always a useful fallback, and whose own status depended on having been the beneficiary of text-based teaching themselves. Pettifoggers, we have seen, sometimes tried to call themselves *shih-jen* and were called out for it by judges and other gentlemen,³³⁶ and whether physicians could be *gentlemen* or vice versa was precisely at issue in debates over the place of medicine. In the reactions of *shih* to these occupations, ranging from ambivalence and debate to profound hostility, we surely see an anxiety about boundary-drawing parallel to what we have seen in the sphere of gender.

We may conceive occupational physicians, pettifoggers, rite masters, and clerks as members of a single stratum that one might call the *lumpenliterate*: newly literate and nouveau riche to nouveau-middling men, able to educate themselves in certain ways, but not yet equipped with the specific kinds of learning, perhaps the degree of wealth, and above all the networks that would make them plausible candidates to participate as welcome members in gentlemanly circles. The most successful of such men knocked their heads against the floor of the *shih* stratum, or even – in specific contexts of interaction, perhaps – edged into it. How large this stratum was, let alone the presumably larger group surrounding it that was in some sense literate but did not make textual pursuits its occupation, we cannot measure (we have seen that estimating the size of the *shih* stratum itself is difficult), but when considering the

³³⁶ Akagi Ryūji, "Nansōki no soshō ni tsuite," p. 9, cites Huang Kan to the effect that local fomenters of litigation "have a rough knowledge of writing and call themselves *shih-jen*." Their knowledge of writing, of course, had to be far better than rough to draw up complaints and coach others in the language of law, judgments, and punishments, but they may not have been elegant writers of extended literary prose. For men "falsely assuming the cap and robe of *Ju* (scholars, Confucians)" as pettifoggers, see the judgments by Weng Hao-t'ang (who is at some pains to distinguish his example from "the *shih* sort," whom he wishes to treat with proper respect and etiquette) and Hu Shi-pi in *Ming-kung shu-p'an qing-ming chi*, p. 475. For pettifoggers who claim to hold low-level offices, doubted by the judges, see pp. 474 and 476. For one whom the judge seems to treat as if he may really be a *shih* (judging by the title of his judgment, "A *shih-jen* drums up lawsuits and coerces the county officials"), who holds some position in the county school, and who amazes the judge by claiming that providing advocate services is his "duty" (*i*), receiving a lecture on Mencius in response, see pp. 477–8.

social place of gentlemen we should bear in mind these “lower” yet also in some degree “elite” strata from whom they needed to distinguish themselves.³³⁷

It is worth considering other potential social or cultural dividing lines. Trade, though often imagined to be a crucial class- or stratum-defining matter in Chinese history, does not seem to have excluded Sung men from recognition as *shih*: the case of Lu Chiu-yüan, whose family derived almost its entire wealth from a drugstore in its home county, is well known.³³⁸ A member of an old and powerful *shih* family from the same region could make plans to ship large quantities of porcelain to north China for sale there without compromising his status.³³⁹ Chu Hsi could print and sell his books. The issue was whether in other ways a man or his family did things appropriate to a gentleman. When Huang Chen excludes the owner of a dye-shop from his inheritance case, we have seen that he specifically notes that the man has given up study.³⁴⁰

A more complicated case is that of military service. The stereotype of the Sung is as a time of civilian dominance, when “martial” (*wu*) involvements were looked down upon by a *shih* elite that defined itself as “civil” (*wen*). Certainly some Sung gentlemen did express such views. But practice was complex. Regular soldiers, often tattooed, recruited partly from among criminals, and sometimes serving hereditarily, were certainly nobody that a gentleman would interact with on terms of equality (e.g. through marriage). But there were many other kinds of military men. Winston Lo has shown that the “military” ranks whose holders filled half the Sung bureaucracy were probably in most cases only nominally military: these men held regular, if mainly rather low, positions that in many other contexts one would regard as “civil.”³⁴¹ The prestige of these ranks (those of the *Yu-p'an* or “Right Section”) was certainly lower, and their recruitment was largely via hereditary, or *yin*, privilege; the separate military examinations through which some passed, themselves of considerably lower prestige than the civil examinations, supplied a much lower percentage of these men than the civil examinations did for the other section.³⁴² Military

³³⁷ What other occupations might fall into the same presumptive stratum is a question that deserves thought and work. Printers, like those studied by Lucille Chia (n. 47 above), seem an obvious candidate, alongside the “document shop” owners to whom the state wanted non-*shih* litigants to resort instead of to pettifoggers (see Ch'en Chih-ch'ao in n. 101 above).

³³⁸ On the Lu family and its massive drug business, see, for example, Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, p. 298 n. 52; for scattered evidences of other *shih* involvement in commerce in the same prefecture, see pp. 74 and 298 n. 60.

³³⁹ Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, p. 298 n. 54.

³⁴⁰ Huang Chen, *Huang-shih jih-ch'ao* (SKCSCP ed.), 78, pp. 36a–40b, especially 37b.

³⁴¹ Winston Wan Lo, *An introduction to the civil service of Sung China: With emphasis on its personnel administration* (Honolulu, 1987), especially pp. 27–9 and 102–9.

³⁴² Though conventionally called “hereditary privilege,” the *yin* privilege should not be confused with actual inheritance of positions of the sort that sometimes happened among soldiers. Under the system of *yin*, bureaucratic officials of certain ranks, both within the “civil” Left Section and within the

rank thus carried a much lower *presumption* of study and learning (though there was no inherent reason why a man of study and learning could not hold it). In these senses it is undeniable that the holder of a military degree or rank held a resource of lower value in status calculations than the holder of a civil degree or office. But of course, as with civil officials and degreeholders (or those who held neither office nor degree), he might hold other status-relevant resources; there is no evidence that military rank defined a *social stratum* or *category* necessarily apart from the *shih* – that a *shih* family would never send a son into the Right Section, or would forswear marriage or association with men on that side of the bureaucracy. On the contrary, insofar as military rank gave entry to bureaucratic position and a salary just as civil rank did, it seems probable that it would sometimes be attractive to families of secure *shih* status, depending on the son.³⁴³ In the absence of further research on just this question it is at best premature, at worst wrong, to suppose that the division between Left Section and Right Section of the bureaucracy divided *shih* from non-*shih*.

Something more like a social division may have existed in the first century or so of the Sung between *shih* and the powerful and privileged families descended from the generals who together with the first emperor Chao K'uang-yin had organized the coup d'état that founded the dynasty. These families, continuing to supply empresses and exchange women with the imperial family at least through the fifth Sung emperor (thus into the 1060s), were in effect an appendage to the "inner court" and might often have the emperor's ear directly or through their women. Peter Lorge has pointed out that in the 1079 trial of Su Shih for criticism of state policy, his fellow defendant Wang Shen, descendant of one of the founding generals and thus husband of the emperor's sister, never faced anything like the danger that Su faced in the course of the trial.³⁴⁴ Yet the same discrimination might have occurred if Su's codefendant had been connected to a prime minister or other exceptionally powerful *shih* – that is, the discrimination was perhaps political, not social. To see these old "military" families (most of whose members, as Lorge points out, were no longer in any sense military) as a distinct stratum from the *shih*, one would need to explain away the fact that they sometimes

"military" Right Section, were allowed to name a limited number of kinsmen who would be granted not inheritance of their own offices, but separate entry into the bureaucracy via low-level initial positions. On the "military" side a wider range of ranks was entitled to this privilege. See Lo, *An introduction to the civil service*, pp. 102–9.

³⁴³ Cheng-Hua Fang argues just this: "For less talented literati, the military examination and academy became a circuitous route to reach civil posts, because the government provided the opportunity to transfer from military office to civil office." See Cheng-Hua Fang, "Military families and the Southern Sung court: The Lü case," in *Warfare in China to 1600*, ed. Peter Lorge (Burlington, 2005), p. 443.

³⁴⁴ Peter Lorge, "The Northern Song military aristocracy and the royal family," in *Warfare in China to 1600*, ed. Peter Lorge (Burlington, 2005), pp. 429–39; the Su trial case is treated on p. 42.

intermarried with undoubted *shih* families. Lorge himself, with respect to these descendants of generals in their interaction with other elites, offers the promising suggestion that the “civil” versus “military” distinction is not perhaps the best way to understand Sung society; and the assumption that the *shih* were invariably or inherently “civil” may be subject to the same difficulties, as we will see further below.

Lorge argues that a real military–civil split, at least in office, came only in late Southern Sung, though developing gradually up to that time; and he notes Huang Kuan-chung’s demonstration that in Southern Sung the court was dominated by southerners while men from northern backgrounds “dominated the ranks of the Sung armies in the Huai–Yangzi River defense belt.”³⁴⁵ This would fit with the other evidence that *shih* attempted to police their own boundaries more closely over the course of Southern Sung; but in the case of military ties the argument appears doubtful. It is certainly true, as Huang has also shown elsewhere, that the military commissioners (*chen-fu shih*), with their independent armies, created by the Southern Sung court right after the move south to pacify and guard the Chiang–Huai border areas and other regions on the model of the T’ang military governors, were entirely northern and usually of military or low social origins.³⁴⁶ But some of these men crossed the line seemingly dividing them from southern *shih* with ease, or their descendants did. Hsin Ch’i-chi (1140–1207), founder of the Flying Tiger Army of Hu-nan, though descended from generations of northern military officers on his father’s side, was accepted easily as a *shih* and was known afterward mainly for his lyric poetry.³⁴⁷ The martyred general Yüeh Fei (1103–42), of purely military and much more lowly background than Hsin, may never have been seen as a *shih* in his own time, though he was revered by many of them and clearly had *shih* connections; but his grandson Yüeh K’o (1183–1240) was a gentleman and author of minor reputation. The most powerful late Southern Sung general, Lü Wen-te (again of purely military background), though Cheng-Hua Fang tells us he was contemptuous of literati (although the word used by Lü is not *shih* but *wen-jen*, pointing more to occupation than to social identity), formed close ties with leading *shih* for political purposes, recommended some of the most prominent gentlemen of the period, and gained transfer into civil office

³⁴⁵ Lorge, “The Northern Song military aristocracy and the royal family,” pp. 46–7. See Huang Kuan-chung, “Ts’ung ho-chan tao nan-pei-jen,” in *Chung-kuo li-shih shang te Fen yü Ho hsueh-shu yen-t’ao-hui lun-wen-chi* (Taipei: Lien-ho pao-his wen-hua chi-chin-hui, 1995), pp. 168–89.

³⁴⁶ Huang Kuan-chung, *Nan-Sung ti-fang wu-li*, p. 333.

³⁴⁷ On Hsin Ch’i-chi’s military stature, see, for example, Huang Kuan-chung, “Ts’ung ho-chan tao nan-pei-jen,” p. 330; for a general biography that emphasizes his literary side, see Irving Yucheng Lo, *Hsin Ch’i-chi* (New York, 1971).

for his son.³⁴⁸ Perhaps because prominent military men commanded political and social power and might become very wealthy, social interaction with *shih* of more purely civil or literary background does not seem to have been unusual, and the ease with which one can find cases of mobility across the boundary (or of straddling it), in contrast to the difficulty of documenting similar mobility or straddling between clerk and *shih* or doctor and *shih*, for example (though both surely occurred), suggests that less shame attached to the interaction.

Finally, at a level below the regional armies, we have seen that it was not unusual in Southern Sung for local gentlemen to become officers of private militia in their own localities.³⁴⁹ Lu Chiu-yüan's family is again a well-known case, and for them *shih* status probably preceded militia command, as it certainly did for some others in his county and prefecture. For others of the Lus' partners, militia leadership may have been a route to acceptance as *shih*, but persisted long after success in the examinations.³⁵⁰ At the end of the dynasty Wen T'ien-hsiang and Hsieh Fang-te are other famous cases. In the Lus' region militia service may have been the specialty of *shih* families of only certain kinds,³⁵¹ while most abstained; but it did not divide *shih* from non-*shih*. In north China, local elite militarization may be older. Paul Smith has shown that in the north, Northern Sung institutional innovations had produced a militarized rural society that included even wealthy landowners, as *pao-chia* officers, in the regular training of state militia.³⁵² Officeholders and degree-holders were probably spared such service, but of course the rich landlords involved may often have been their kin, with claims of their own to *shih* status. In sum, the Sung *shih* class was less purely "civil" than is often supposed, and a civil-military line did not necessarily define social groups or strata.

Southern Song elite culture

But to return to Southern Sung gentlemen and "localism," it is worth summing up what the burgeoning local aspect of the *shih*-oriented culture looked like; at the level of phenomena, if not explanation, the field largely agrees. Southern Sung elites displayed a host of new involvements at the local level. The private academy, embryonic in early Northern Sung and interrupted by the expansion of state schools in the eleventh century, now grew up as a supplement and

³⁴⁸ Cheng-Hua Fang, "Military families and the Southern Song court," pp. 448-53.

³⁴⁹ Huang Kuan-chung, *Nan-Sung ti-fang wu-li*, p. 350, notes the existence of *shih*-led militia in Southern Sung but does not dwell extensively on the matter.

³⁵⁰ Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, pp. 136-50. ³⁵¹ Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, pp. 149-50.

³⁵² Paul Jakov Smith, "*Shuibu zhuan* and the military subculture of the Northern Song, 960-1127," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 66 No. 2 (December 2006), especially pp. 388-98.

often frank alternative to official school life, and as a local node in national *shih* networks. We have seen elites' promotion of **local gods** and organization of **local militias**, **Charitable and community granaries**, the latter Chu Hsi's revision of a late Northern Sung antireformer's plan for a private substitute for Wang An-shih's Green Sprouts rural credit program, spread across south China, organized by *shih* sometimes in their capacity as local gentlemen at home and sometimes as administrators elsewhere.³⁵³ **Temple building, bridge building, school building, dam building, and irrigation repair** became media for the display of *shih* virtue, celebrated as such in inscriptions authored by fellow *shih*. **Poetic societies, academic societies, and vague clubs of virtuous men** like Wei K'o's Society for Truth and Sincerity sprang up across the landscape as local equivalents and sometimes building blocks of national academic and political networks.

A new model of the local lineage spread among elites high and low. The **high-profile but rare lineage organizations** of high Northern Sung officials like Fan Chung-yen had **limited the generations of included kin**, yielding a lineage that could not grow beyond a certain temporal depth and could not be coterminous with a growing kin-based community over time. In this way it both committed its high-elite founding members to aid their kin in their home localities and limited the commitment. The model that spread in Southern Sung was based in principle on **inclusion of all descendants of the first-arriving local ancestor**, and so produced a lineage that could be an ever-expanding pool of kin available for elites to draw upon for support and alliance in their home communities. **Hugh Clark** has found evidence that this model was already in play in Northern Sung in southern Fu-chien, among elites perforce thoroughly local because they had not yet made much progress into the examination-based national networks of the time; and **John W. Chaffee** shows that it emerges similarly early in the imperial clan; but its spread across south China and adoption as **the standard model of genealogy writing, common estate foundation, and (when this occurred) co-operation of elites with extended agnates** still seems to be a Southern Sung phenomenon, continuing strongly into the Yüan.³⁵⁴ (The

³⁵³ Von Glahn, "Community and welfare"; and Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen*, pp. 152–7; Liang Keng-yao, *Nan-Sung te nung-ts'un ching-chi*, chapter 5.

³⁵⁴ See Hymes, "Marriage, descent groups, and the localist strategy in Sung and Yuan Fu-chou"; Clark, "The Fu of Minnan"; and "An inquiry into the Xianyou Cai: Cai Xiang, Cai Que, Cai Jing, and the politics of kinship"; John W. Chaffee, *Branches of heaven: A history of the imperial clan of Sung China* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), especially pp. 264–5; and Walton, "Charitable estates as an aspect of statecraft." (See also Bossler, *Powerful relations*, pp. 152–5, who finds agnatic organization along lineage lines only a relatively weak impulse in Wu-chou.) More precisely, Chaffee shows that **a debate over the nature of the imperial clan once it exceeded the bounds of the five-generation mourning circle ultimately resolved itself in favor of the classical *tsung* model, which then allowed the clan to be imagined (and administered) as an indefinitely growing group of kinsmen. The *tsung* model was by no means the**

imperial clan itself, as Chaffee has shown, mirrors wider elite developments in striking ways, moving from actual legal restriction to the capital in its first century to become a scattered network of mostly locally rooted families and sublineages living often very *shih*-style lives in Southern Sung, though its privileges in the examinations kept it partly distinct and it maintained separate regional administrative centers of very different character.³⁵⁵) A new genre of local history grew up, departing from its administratively focused Northern Sung precursors and organizing itself around the celebration both of what was special to its locality and of those things that made its gentlemen like proper gentlemen elsewhere, thus providing a local identity that could stand alongside the local identities of other gentlemen within national *shih* networks.³⁵⁶ For as both Bossler and Bol have argued in slightly different terms, being “local” was now part of what one needed in order to be “national.”

What remained of Northern Sung court-centered elite practices no doubt varied not only by region but by family. An elite in a weak economy could not afford to neglect office when it came its way, and Bossler’s achievement is to show us how much a Southern Sung family that reached the heights of office could act like its Northern Sung equivalents even in marriage. But this avenue was open to very few, and Bossler’s evidence too seems to suggest to me that no tightly interwoven capital-centered network of preferentially intermarrying families on Northern Sung lines survived in Southern Sung, all the more because (as she suggests) there were now chances of marriage with families of parallel achievement within one’s own locality or region. The penetration of the *shih*-oriented culture, however, went very high. Richard Davis’s Shih family of Ming-chou seems the ideal type of a Northern Sung-style Southern Sung family, producing high officials for several generations, devoting itself to court politics and, in the case of chief councilor Shih Mi-yüan, assuming a virtually imperial role.³⁵⁷ Yet Davis has also written of the massive tombs, imperial in size and wealth, that the Shih family built at home in Ming-chou at its court peak.³⁵⁸ This was massive status display, but not aimed at court and capital,

same as the lineage model that became predominant in Southern Sung, but was often used to justify it. As Chaffee shows, the Sung founder T’ai-tsu had already imagined his clan as a permanently growing and far-flung group. In Southern Sung the imperial clan, as Chaffee also shows (pp. 223–7), came to adopt the localized lineage model more and more in its own now widely scattered local communities.

³⁵⁵ See Chaffee, *Branches of heaven*, whose conclusion summarizes this long arc nicely: pp. 261–75.

³⁵⁶ See especially Peter Bol, “The rise of local history: History, geography, and culture in Southern Song and Yuan Wuzhou,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 61 No. 1 (2001), pp. 37–76; and James Hargett, “Song dynasty gazetteers and their place in the history of *Difangzhi* writing,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 56 No. 2 (1996), pp. 405–42.

³⁵⁷ Richard Davis, *Court and family in Sung China*.

³⁵⁸ Richard L. Davis, “The Shi tombs at Dongqian Lake,” *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies* 26 (1996), pp. 201–16.

since the tombs were in the Ming-chou countryside. As an assertion of status and power the tombs can only have been addressed to other *shih*, especially those of the Shih family's own county and prefecture – or to Shih lineage-men beyond the *shih* class, in which sense the tombs would be an assertion of local identity just as lineage organization itself was. Even the highest and courtliest Southern Sung court official, it seems, wanted to address his final status claim to *shih* and others in his home locality. These are the tombs a Northern Sung chief councilor would have built if he had thought home was where the social and cultural action was.

We should return here to the Learning of the Way movement and its relation to all this change. On the one hand one may see the movement, with its translocal but not state-based networks, as a direct expression of the shift toward *shih*-oriented culture, and Peter Bol has argued in several places that the thought of Chu Hsi and other Learning of the Way teachers precisely served the aspirations and interests of an elite that could not or need not rely on office but needed to know what being a gentleman meant, in moral and cultural terms but for institutional and ritual action as well, when it did not mean being an official.³⁵⁹ In the complex of new local phenomena we have just seen, the Learning of the Way played a varying role, crucial in the spread of the private academy and the community granary, but tangential or merely commentarial to lineage organization, for instance, and critical of much else – temple building, god promotion, the competitive display of poetic societies, the ready violence of militia leaders, and so on. For this movement was not only a reflection of the *shih*-oriented culture, but a considered and critical response to it: “our faction” was a faction of gentlemen participating in the gentlemanly life of its times and speaking in terms comprehensible within that life, but at least for its leaders it was a faction of social critics, offering a model of gentlemanly conduct that, if realized, would have changed *shih* life almost as much as Wang An-shih's reforms would have. This complexity in the movement's relation to the cultural changes of its period should not be missed.

Northern–Southern difference after the Southern Sung

The changes in the elite of Southern Sung traced here, by definition, took place in southern China: after 1127 there was no “Sung elite” in the north. It is an intriguing question whether the picture we now have of the Southern

³⁵⁹ Most recently, this is one of the several important threads of argument in Peter K. Bol's *Neo-Confucianism in history* (Cambridge, MA, 2008).

Sung elite, with its striking continuities with the local elites of the Yüan, Ming, and Ch'ing, may be a specifically southern picture – since even for Ming and Ch'ing, most elite-focused social history has dealt with the south. The difficulty in posing the question is that it is virtually impossible to undertake locally rooted social history, of the kind that has now repeatedly been done for south China, for any region of north China in the Sung, Yüan, and perhaps the first half of the Ming. **Because of repeated war and destruction of books between the tenth and seventeenth centuries, sources such as local gazetteers and collected works do not survive in adequate number from the north even if they once existed, and they may never have existed in anything like similar abundance, or at least not before middle Ming.** We are limited to speculating, but with some foundation.

The picture drawn so far gives great weight to **demography**, to an expansion of markets and wealth that enabled an elite to maintain its style of life even in the absence of office, and to a resulting growth of the elite beyond the state's capacity to absorb it into office. It may be very important, then, that, while southern population tended to grow steadily from the T'ang through the Ming, the north was probably **a net loser of population** to the south throughout the period and repeatedly lost more population to war than the south did; that northern **food crops** could not generally support as dense a population as southern rice; that the less watered landscape of the north made **river transport**, the lifeblood of southern commerce, impractical in much of the north; and that from Sung on the most significant **urban and commercial centers** of China apart from the capital were always in the south, as were the most important centers of book production. Southern elite advantage is already clear in the Sung, when the state began to adjust examination quotas so as to reinforce northern representation in the bureaucracy; without these measures, southern-born officials would have vastly outnumbered northern-born. This surely reflected **a southern *shih* elite that greatly outnumbered its northern counterpart**, probably even more than overall southern population outnumbered northern. All this makes it natural to ask whether in north China the elite ever *did* grow, at least in Sung through Ming, to a point that exceeded the state's capacity to employ it, or whether it did so to anything like the degree that it did in the south; and **whether it was harder in the north than in the south for elite families to maintain their status and style of life without the income of office.** If at least a large difference of degree obtained, then one might expect northern elites simply to be more dependent on the state for their continued existence, and one might also expect that the lesser ease of transport and communication in the north would make the building of broad transregional networks much more difficult too, except through the hub of

the capital.³⁶⁰ Was a pyramidal, state-centered network of status distribution simply more appropriate to north Chinese conditions?

This speculation amounts to a set of predictions about what future work might find, especially for periods after the Sung, insofar as northern sources will allow such work. But work already done provides important hints. The Yüan establishment of Chu Hsi's version of the Learning of the Way, which represented its first real introduction into north China, came about through agitation and promotion focused entirely on the capital and the court.³⁶¹ Private academies, a critical institution of the horizontal *shih* networks of south China from Southern Sung through Ch'ing, did not begin to spread extensively in north China before the middle Ming dynasty, and even then were often "branch" institutions of southern academies, founded by local administrators of southern origins instead of by native elites.³⁶² Khee Heong Koh has shown that the fifteenth-century northern scholar Hsüeh Hsüan (1389–1464), later canonized as a northern representative of the Learning of the Way, played down private teacher–student relations; neither founded, taught in, nor commemorated any private academy; and placed his hopes for the propagation of his own teaching and the Learning of the Way in state schools.³⁶³ Koh suggests that "for northern thinkers the two most legitimate organizations were families and the state," to the exclusion of intermediate institutions and networks of the kind favored by southern Learning of the Way thinkers; Hsüeh himself "saw the state as the source of family honor and the state-sponsored educational system as the correct place to promote Neo-Confucianism."³⁶⁴ Timothy Sedo's dissertation on Lin-chang county in Ho-nan in the Ming proposes that the elite culture of the county represents a statist and administrator-centered alternative to the gentry-centered "Jiangnan model" (as he terms it) that has emerged from scholarship on the local history of south China from Sung through Ch'ing.³⁶⁵ Tian Yüan Tan, studying *ch'ü*-writing "communities" in north China in the sixteenth century, finds that the literary/social networks

³⁶⁰ In these speculations I am heavily indebted to Peter Bol, who has regularly exchanged thoughts with me on such questions for more than thirty years.

³⁶¹ On the establishment of *Tao-hsiieh* as state-sponsored orthodoxy in the Yüan, see among others William Theodore de Bary, *Neo-Confucian orthodoxy and the learning of the mind-and-heart* (New York, 1981). Of course southern Learning of the Way advocates tried to gain approval for their teaching at court too, but in Yüan north China there is no evidence of the extensive private and local network-based spread of the teaching that in south China preceded and coexisted with capital-focused efforts.

³⁶² Pai Hsin-liang, *Chung-kuo ku-tai shu-yüan fa-chan shih* (Tientsin, 1995).

³⁶³ Khee Heong Koh, *A northern alternative: Xue Xuan (1389–1464) and the Hedong school* (Cambridge, MA, 2011). On Xue's attitude toward private teaching, see pp. 98–105; on academies and government schools and Xue's differences from southern scholars' views, see pp. 105–19.

³⁶⁴ The quoted passages appear in Koh, *A northern alternative*, pp. 96 and 200 respectively.

³⁶⁵ Timothy Sedo, "Linzhang County and the culturally central periphery in mid-Ming China" (diss., University of British Columbia, 2010).

he studies emerged only after their members had been banned from office and “official literary culture” for political reasons.³⁶⁶ All this suggests that the question of north–south differences in elite networks and elite self-construction after the changes of Southern Sung deserves considerable further attention.

CONCLUSION

In the rise of the Sung elite and its cultural transformation across time we have seen again the three underlying processes proposed at the beginning of this chapter: the rise of the market, the rise of the printed book, and the changing place of the state. It is interesting to look back and consider also to what extent the changes in elite culture bore on the other phenomena the chapter has explored. One can imagine that as office became less central to *shih* aspirations, the potential for blurring of lines between the ideal model of a proper gentleman and that of a proper gentlewoman that we have seen in the section on women grew even stronger than other changes of the period had already made it. Thus it makes sense that thinkers of the Learning of the Way like Chu Hsi, who were working out ideally what made a gentleman aside from office, should also have worked the most explicitly to clarify lines between male and female with a new model of the literate, teacherly, and managerial woman (in these respects like a male *shih*) – lacking her own wealth, confined to the home, and freed of ties to the outside (in these respects unlike a male *shih*). The multiplication of printing centers from thirty or so in Northern to two hundred in Southern Sung, and their wider dispersion (within the confines of the south), as well as the state exit from printing, looks natural against the background of an elite that was larger, less focused on the capital, and a ready audience for books in the localities, where it now spent much of its time. The much more frequent objections in elite writings (as opposed to state decrees) to “pettifoggers,” odd new religious practitioners, and other new literate professions in Southern Sung make sense against the tightening of elite positions of which we have seen evidence. And both the growing role of elites as patrons of Ch’an Buddhists or local gods and the angry reactions of Learning of the Way thinkers take on clearer meaning when elites and their critics alike were debating what it meant to be a gentleman, what it meant to be local, and how one could be both. The social and cultural changes of the Sung, in sum, are an interwoven fabric, and the field has only begun to explore the weave.

³⁶⁶ Tuan Yuan Tan, “Qu writing in literary communities: Rediscovering Sanqu songs and drama in sixteenth-century north China” (diss., Harvard University, 2006).

To find market relations and book printing at the root of a wide range of social and cultural changes in middle imperial China suggests obvious parallels to processes of change in other times and places – most obviously in what has come to be called “early modern” Europe. It was Naitō Torajirō who first proposed that the Sung began China’s “modernity,” and the notion has cropped up again and again in Sung and post-Sung studies since Naitō’s time.³⁶⁷ More recently some scholars have posited the “early modern” as a near-global phenomenon encompassing parallel changes³⁶⁸ – the spread of market relations, the rise of new elites, and the expansion of literacy are usually marked as central – in an array of Eurasian societies across a sometimes vague span of time: the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are common beginning points, but some see signs of early modernity in the thirteenth century or even earlier, and this brings Sung China to the fore. The heuristic advantage of a global notion of early modernity is to call attention to dramatic economic and social change of kinds that look similar to those of post-Renaissance Europe but sometimes even precede them, to show their independence of anything like “Westernization,” and thus to undermine a European exceptionalism that others would push back into the Renaissance or Middle Ages. Parallels to European experience do abound in the Sung – not simply markets, money, new elites, and printed books, but cultural and material tendencies sometimes strikingly similar. Consider a selective list: (1) a relative decline in the cultural power of clergies, increasing belief in the capacity of the individual literate layperson to understand classical and sacred texts on his own and make direct contact with the powers behind the universe, and the emergence of puritanizing fundamentalist networks (the Learning of the Way); (2) intellectual appeals to a classical past from which the present is seen as cut off by centuries-long cultural decline, but which can be recalled or reconstructed in a uniquely privileged new age; (3) the penetration of mental habits of commerce and bookkeeping into religious and ethical practice; (4) attempts, in a setting of recurrent war between militarily equal states, to create a more penetrating and all-encompassing state that can both manage commerce for revenue purposes and assert military power outward (Wang An-shih); (5) the rise and development of gunpowder technology, culminating in true cannon and in gun-like sidearms for infantry; (6) parallel advances in shipping technology and navigation, which in China would permit global

³⁶⁷ For a recent treatment, see Harriet Thelma Zurndorfer, “China and ‘modernity’: The uses of the study of Chinese history in the past and the present,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40 No. 4 (1997), pp. 461–85.

³⁶⁸ See, for example, the contributions to the Special Anniversary issue of *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 40 No. 4 (1997); and the critical responses in 41 No. 3 (1998), which include the article of Jack Goldstone cited below.

exploration by early Ming; (7) urban newspapers and rural printed ballads; and so on.

The weakness of the “early modernity” notion is to imply, in the word “early,” some necessary connection to later “modernity,” to confer a sort of predecessorship on commercialization, printing, and new elites, when nobody has shown that in fact changes of these sorts must lead in any necessary way, in Europe or anywhere else, to the economic “modernity” of the Industrial Revolution or the intellectual/cultural “modernity” of the Enlightenment and after – that is, to the sorts of modernity that the whole world has first had to confront and then had to construct in the last two centuries. Jack Goldstone, following E. A. Wrigley, has proposed the term “advanced organic society” (where “organic” refers to the continuing predominance of animal and human sources of energy) to encompass what others have called “early modern” across Eurasia. For Goldstone the category serves both to counter European exceptionalism in preindustrial times and yet to emphasize the remaining distance of societies of this stage from industrial modernity.³⁶⁹ To my ear the term, with its sound of a smoothly inevitable final stage, has the disadvantage of understating the real drama and disruption of the changes that one sees in Sung China, “early modern” Europe, and elsewhere – and the creative and varying cultural responses that seemingly parallel changes provoked – but also of overlooking the extensive use of coal-derived energy and water power as transformative and motive forces in the Sung. A provocative alternative is Linda Schaffer’s notion of “Southernization,” which ties together some of the changes that other scholars combine as “early modernity” in a complex of global-trade-generated marketization; intensifying agriculture built on new crops like cotton, early-ripening rice, and sugar; and corresponding social changes, beginning in India and Southeast Asia in the fifth century or so AD and propagating themselves via trade networks to China, Western Asia, and Mediterranean Europe in a long process complete by the thirteenth century or so. Only when northwestern Europe, a latecomer, has in turn been “Southernized” on these models do the processes we think of as modernity ensue. Thus “Southernization” – the narrative irony is obvious and intentional – becomes a necessary precursor to eventual “Westernization.”³⁷⁰

But the lesson of global comparisons of “early modern” societies may be precisely that “modernity” is a deeply problematic notion. Under “modernity” we have tended to lump together historical changes that may have no more connection than the contingent one that in Europe they all happen to

³⁶⁹ Jack Goldstone, “The problem of the ‘early modern’ world,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 41 No. 3 (1998), pp. 249–84.

³⁷⁰ Linda Schaffer, “Southernization,” *Journal of World History* 5 No. 1 (1994), pp. 1–20.

have happened in the last 400 hundred years. The study of (for example) Sung China forces us to disaggregate our notion of “modernity,” so that penetrating markets, printed books, secularization, Weberian bureaucratization, and especially the penetrating and nation-building state no longer appear simply to “belong” together. It may be argued that the most thoroughly bureaucratized and socially penetrating states in China before Mao were built in the third century BC, with perhaps a second peak in the early T’ang, and that after an attempt at something very like “nation building” by Wang An-shih the Chinese state from Sung through Ming grew *less* penetrating while economic and technological change proceeded. The commercializing of books, scriptures, and statuses in Sung China led not to secularization, it seems, but to a laicization expressed both in a puritanizing intellectual movement with secularist ambitions, and in a vast upsurge of new deity cults, exorcizing and purifying rituals, and new religious practitioners. If all this is true, then surely we do not yet understand how the multifarious changes we have often lumped together as “modern,” early or otherwise, depended on each other – or did not – and whether any of them is necessarily specific to the modern, in Europe or anywhere else. If new commercial elites in twentieth-century Taiwan are not secularist but the promoters of new cults to gods of wealth,³⁷¹ if their equivalents in India are attracted to a new fundamentalist and nationalist polytheism, and if Muslim fundamentalist leaders are engineers and factory owners – if indeed innovative religious fundamentalisms are sprouting across Asia and in North America precisely as global marketization proceeds – perhaps we should not be surprised, because we have seen combinations of change just as interesting, and just as challenging to rooted assumptions about which sorts of change go with which and what sorts are modern, in Sung China.

³⁷¹ Robert Weller, “Capitalism, community, and the rise of amoral cults in Taiwan,” in *Asian visions of authority: Religion and the modern states of East and Southeast Asia*, ed. Charles F. Keyes, Laurel Kendall, and Helen Hardacre (Honolulu, 1994), pp. 141–64.

CHAPTER 9

RECONCEPTUALIZING THE ORDER OF THINGS IN NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN SUNG

Peter K. Bol

THE SUNG INTELLECTUAL LEGACY

To begin at the end: The intellectual legacy of the Sung period was a reconceptualization of the order of things – of the relations between past and present, cosmos and human affairs, state and society, culture and morality – that would not be fundamentally challenged until the seventeenth century.

The social context for this reconceptualization was a transformation of the national elite, of men who thought of themselves as *shih*, from the offspring of families with long pedigrees of state service in the T'ang (618–907), to men whose membership in the national elite was vouchsafed by their education. The civil service examinations, which had been expanded to become the primary means of recruiting civil officials in the late tenth century, together with a system of state schools, which had been extended down to the county level in the latter half of the eleventh century, encouraged those with the means to acquire an education and seek recognition. The numbers participating in the examination system increased steadily: as many as 450,000 in Southern Sung territory by the mid-thirteenth century. The fact that every three years only 400–600 received the coveted *chin-shih* degree, and only 500–700 “facilitated” degrees were given to those who had repeatedly failed the examinations, makes clear that the pool of “literati” (as we may now translate the term *shih* in recognition of the importance of a literary education to their status) was far larger than the number of officials and provided an expanding market for those who could provide others with an education.

In tracing the development of literati thought there is an important distinction between the Northern and Southern Sung periods, a distinction that also has a regional character. The Northern Sung intellectuals most influential at the time generally were concerned with the state and its officials and their potential for transforming society. Northern Sung intellectual culture had different outcomes in the north and south. Although the north

China plain was lost to the Chin dynasty (1115–1234) in 1126, during the latter half of the twelfth century the examination system was restored to the point where, although its examination and school system were less elaborate, it was granting more degrees to a smaller pool of literati than was the case in Sung territory. Chin literati largely continued the more conservative state-oriented intellectual trends of the Northern Sung.¹ In contrast, Southern Sung intellectuals generally were more concerned with the ways in which individual, communal, and local activities could be made to serve the common good.

Thus in speaking of the Sung legacy we are concerned with that which took final shape during the Southern Sung period, a fact that bears on our understanding of the social context of intellectual life. For the Southern Sung state came to depend on the same market-based economy of the south that supported the large numbers of literati elite families who participated in the examination system. In contrast to T'ang, the Southern Sung government rarely sought control over the economy and private interests and, in contrast to Northern Sung, the Southern Sung government was far less interested in transforming society into an ideal order. The rise of literati elites with considerable local self-consciousness; the belief that literati without official status should organize voluntary local efforts in culture and education, welfare, and local defense; and the spread of private academies which prided themselves on encouraging learning rather than mere examination preparation, are all dealt with in other chapters. I mention them here because important intellectual movements in Southern Sung spread laterally, through local literati communities, rather than being mandated by the state or being part of the political culture of the bureaucracy, as had been the case in Northern Sung and T'ang and would remain the case under the Chin, and they encouraged literati to think that things of national importance could be practiced at the local level through voluntary efforts.

For Sung literati what we would call the reconceptualization of the order of things was a matter of redefining "learning," *hsüeh*, a term which includes both knowledge acquisition and ideological formation. It is common to think of Sung intellectual history (sans its Buddhist and Taoist participants) in terms of a revival of "Confucianism" leading to "Neo-Confucianism." In recent times scholars have used the term "Confucianism" rather broadly: to hypostatize a "traditional" political culture and social system or an orthodoxy of state-supported and state-supporting values, or to refer to traditions of teaching

¹ Hoyt Cleveland Tillman and Stephen West, eds., *China under Jurchen rule: Essays on Chin intellectual and cultural history* (Albany, 1995). Peter K. Bol, "Seeking common ground: Han literati under Jurchen rule," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic studies* 47 No. 2 (1987), pp. 461–538.

and learning associated with the people who called themselves *ju*. To take “learning” as the topic for this chapter, even when limiting the discussion to literati ideas about learning, allows us to give more central roles to thinkers such as Wang An-shih (1021–86) and Su Shih (1037–1101), whom the Neo-Confucian definition of *ju* learning marginalized. Even those Sung literati who did propose definitions of what it meant to be a true *ju* defined their mission as one of teaching others how they should learn. The subjects of this chapter generally believed that they were (re)discovering the one true way to learn, and most claimed that it stemmed from Confucius (551–479 BC) and the sage kings. However, they did not agree with each other about what that way was. In looking at how they formulated their ideas I shall give particular attention to how they differed one from another.

From the perspective of later centuries, the Sung was a second founding of elite culture: it provided the lens through which antiquity was to be understood; its writers and thinkers provided literary assumptions and philosophical ideas with reference to which later literature and thought proceeded. Earlier practices continued but their status and methodology changed. At the heart of this change was a conviction that ideas and the vehicles of their expression could be separated. By the end of Southern Sung the paraphrastic approach to exegesis of the canon at the core of *ju* scholarship from Han (206 BC–AD 220) on, evident in the T’ang *Correct meanings of the Five Classics*, gave way to the application of systematic and coherent philosophical inquiry, such as found in Chu Hsi’s *Collected commentaries on the Four Books*. The art of literary composition, which had become a crucial marker of *shih* education after the Han, remained part of education but, as intellectuals came to see learning as a matter of understanding ideas, lost the ideological significance it had gained during the heyday of the Ancient Style (*Ku-wen*). If Confucian textual learning from the time of the *Analects* onward had been thought of as *wen-hsiieh*, where the texts and cultural forms were to be studied and modeled, then the tone of learning in Sung was closer to what the Neo-Confucians called *Tao-hsiieh*, in which learning was the enterprise of cultivating the ability to see and practice the “Way” as something that could be distinguished from texts and culture. An early statement of this – but also an indication that the distinction was not at first obvious – dates from 1037 when Ts’ai Hsiang (1002–67) criticized a man for thinking that by imitating Han Yü (768–824), the progenitor of the writing of the Ancient Style, he was achieving something of value:

[My earlier letter said that] when you proceed from *tao* to learn *wen* then *tao* is attained and *wen* is also attained. Those who proceed from *wen* to *tao* and have difficulties with *tao* are many. This is why *tao* is the basis of *wen* and *wen* is the function of *tao*. It is more important

to attract others through *tao* than through *wen*. In your previous letter you spoke in terms of literary elaborations, that is why I said this. It is not that I am deprecating literary writing, but that there is a necessary sequence to things.²

Ts'ai's correspondent demurred: by studying the right *wen* he was acquiring its *tao* as well.³ Ts'ai wrote back, explaining,

What I meant was that scholars should put learning *tao* first and learning *wen* second. Yet you say that the *tao* of the Six Classics all proceeded through *wen* in order to become clear and that you have never heard of men who began through the *wen* [of the Classics] and lost *tao*. You have missed the point of my earlier letter.⁴

The point is that in Sung it became possible to be self-consciously ideological, to treat ideas as things of value. The implication of this could be that true values were not grounded in the cultural tradition at all, as Lin Chi-chung (d. 1138 +) asserted: "the Way does not survive due to books...it comes from that which is constant in the human mind."⁵

The most influential reconceptualization of the order of things was established by proponents of *Tao-hsiieh*, formulated initially by Ch'eng I (1033–1107) and consolidated by Chu Hsi, and it is the spread of *Tao-hsiieh* ideology among literati communities, the court's installation of the leading *Tao-hsiieh* thinkers in the Confucian Temple in 1241, and the formal adoption of *Tao-hsiieh* thought into the examination system (through Chu Hsi's commentaries on the Four Books) in 1315 that lead to the conclusion that it would not be possible to speak of "Neo-Confucianism" without *Tao-hsiieh*. The *Tao-hsiieh* movement in the Southern Sung is the subject of a separate chapter and will be treated only briefly in this one. The *Tao-hsiieh* perspective on the order of things revitalized some elements of earlier imperial Confucianism, such as the conviction – doubted and set aside by the T'ang and Northern Sung Ancient Style writers – that Heaven-and-Earth (the natural order) functioned as a coherent, integrated system and that this natural order was fundamental to human morality. But it also transformed them, for example by asserting that the principles of that coherent order were endowed equally in all human beings as human nature, and that the social worth of individuals should be a function of their cultivation of this moral nature. What is clear is that *Tao-hsiieh* as moral philosophy shifted the focus of inquiry away from the problem of how to make political power function morally and toward the question how individuals could cultivate in themselves the real grounds of moral judgment. *Tao-hsiieh* had thus a particular appeal for the masses

² Ts'ai Hsiang, *Tuan-ming chi* (SKCS ed.) 27, p. 7b.

³ For another example of this view at the time, see *Su Shun-ch'in chi* (Shanghai, 1981) 9, p. 102, letter to Sun.

⁴ Ts'ai, *Tuan-ming chi* 27, pp. 9b–10a. ⁵ Lin Chi-chung, *Chu-hsien tsa-chu* (SKCS) 3, pp. 17a–18a.

of literati who saw themselves as aspiring to leadership and wished to act responsibly but could not reasonably expect an examination degree or office.

Tao-hsiieh was not the only intellectual legacy of the Sung period. Far less attention has been given to the many scholars who produced historical studies and treatises on aspects of statecraft, the most influential of whom were south-eastern literati such as Yeh Shih (1150–1223), from Yung-chia in Wen-chou. Like the Neo-Confucians, with whom they had parted ways by the end of the twelfth century, the statecraft thinkers transformed some earlier imperial convictions. They shared, for example, a traditional concern with the structure of the state and a belief in the importance of the economy, but rather than arguing for an expansion of the state's control over economic and social processes as had still been common in Northern Sung, they called for a smaller and less centralized state which facilitated private exchange and they saw social benefit in the private accumulation of wealth. Statecraft thought was geared toward those who served in government at court and in the provinces, but it also addressed questions of great importance to literati elites who had to deal with the political and economic realities of their own locale. This chapter will conclude by exploring certain compatibilities between the statecraft views of the Yung-chia scholars and the new moral philosophy of the Neo-Confucians.

Southern Sung literati had access to a vibrant intellectual culture with multiple teachers at local centers in Chekiang, Kiangsi, Fu-chien, and Szechwan. But its leaders also looked back to Northern Sung and defined themselves relative to its diverse legacy. As Chu Hsi once asked students: who among those "famed for learning in recent times" got the Way of Confucius right: Hu Yüan (993–1057), Ou-yang Hsiu (1007–72), Wang An-shih, Ssu-ma Kuang (1019–86), Su Shih and Su Ch'e (1039–1112), or Ch'eng Hao (1032–85) and Ch'eng I?⁶ Elsewhere Chu argued that the Northern Sung legacy offered three serious choices. There was the "Wang Learning" of Wang An-shih, which had been put into the official curriculum under the New Policies regimes that dominated the last fifty years of Northern Sung, and there were the learnings of Su Shih and Ch'eng I, who in the next generation offered alternatives to Wang.⁷ Although Chu sought to demonstrate the incorrectness of Su and Wang, others thought each of the three had something to offer. Yüan Hsing-tsung (d. 1170) argued in a model examination essay that each of the three had different but compatible strengths. Ch'eng stood for innate morality, Su for pragmatic statecraft, and Wang for institutionalized systems.⁸ Literati

⁶ Chu Hsi, *Hui-an hsien-sheng Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* (Taipei, n.d.) 74, pp. 5a, 12b–13a.

⁷ Peter K. Bol, "Chu Hsi's redefinition of literati learning," in *Neo-Confucian education: The formative stage*, ed. John W. Chaffee and William Theodore de Bary (Berkeley, 1989), pp. 161–3.

⁸ Yüan Hsing-tsung, *Chiu-hua chi* (SKCS ed.) 9, p. 15a.

under the Chin had a similar view, but in contrast to their Southern Sung contemporaries they favored Su Shih over Ch'eng I.⁹

To explain how these alternatives appeared and what they had to offer we must return to the beginning of the Sung dynasty, long before these outcomes could have been predicted.

CULTURE AND IDEOLOGY, 960–1030

The early Sung emperors were inclusive. They halted the attacks of the Later Chou (951–60) on Buddhism and funded the building of new Buddhist and Taoist temples. A translation bureau was established for foreign Buddhist texts and students were sent to the west to study. By the end of Emperor Chen-tsung's reign (997–1022) over 397,000 monks were on the state registers,¹⁰ and that emperor's receipt of letters from Heaven authorizing his performance of the Feng and Shan sacrifices on Mount T'ai resulted in even more patronage for Taoist printing and building projects.¹¹ They also patronized both the *ju* classics and the Confucian Temple and the broader array of textual traditions – histories, ritual, law, and literary art – that had become part of political culture. They received advice from diverse quarters: not only from *ju* who saw the Classics as the enduring guide to moral government, but also from advisers who looked back to Han and spoke of Huang-Lao thought in governing the empire or who looked back to T'ang and spoke of rulers who were “non-active” (*wu-wei*) and supported Taoism in the manner of Emperor Hsüan-tsung (r. 712–56).

There is little indication that the founders let ideology trump practical politics. However, in one respect they did tie learning directly to politics. This was the solution, adopted during T'ai-tsung's reign (976–97), to the question who to recruit as officials for the newly unified empire and how to recruit them. The decision was to recruit the *shih* – rather than military men, clergy, clerical administrators, the locally powerful, and the offspring of powerful families – and to do so by expanding the examinations that tested their knowledge of canonical texts and ability in literary composition.

A decision to favor the *shih* and examinations meant that the price of entry into government service would be *wen*: the shared knowledge of the textual traditions which had their origins in the Chou dynasty (?–256 BC) and harked back to governance of the sage kings of antiquity, an ability to produce culturally resonant texts themselves, and above all a commitment to governance

⁹ See the essays collected in Tillman and West, *China under Jurchen rule*.

¹⁰ Ku Chi-ch'en, *Sung-tai fo-chiao shih* (Cheng-chou, 1993), pp. 1–9, 101–2.

¹¹ Jen Chi-yü, ed., *Chung-kuo tao-chiao shih* (Taipei, 1991), pp. 507–15.

through "civil" (*wen*) rather than military means. After a century of war the civil side's turn had come. But the idea of "civil" rule by men schooled in textual traditions and literary art was not just a swing of the pendulum; it had been theorized as a choice in the eighth and ninth centuries.¹² The great promise of *wen* was that it would bring about an era of stable government under benevolent central authority, as T'ai-tsung made clear when he produced a work with the title *When wen is bright governance transforms* (*Wen ming cheng hua*).¹³ The examination system Sung had inherited from the T'ang and the Later Chou tested *wen*, offering degrees in the "various fields," for which candidates memorized sets of ritual, historical, classical, and legal texts, and the more prestigious *chin-shih* or "*shih* presented at Court," for which they composed a regulated verse poem, a rhapsody, an essay, and several treatises on current issues of government or scholarship. It was T'ai-tsung also who first expanded the examinations into the major recruitment mechanism, automatically gave rank and office to those who passed, and encouraged men to acquire a *shih* education. The growing popularity of the examinations is evident: 5,200 attended the departmental examination in 977, 10,200 in 983, and 17,300 in 992.¹⁴

However, already in the late tenth century there were two very different ways of thinking about the significance of the civil, cultural, and literary heritage, all of which came from T'ang. The first, much favored at court, followed the early T'ang practice of taking possession of the past by sorting and compiling its textual legacy into new works. The *T'ai-p'ing era imperial reader* (*T'ai-p'ing yü-lan*) from 983, in 1,000 *chüan*, covered historical knowledge about Heaven, Earth, and humanity; its counterpart was the *T'ai-p'ing era extended record* (*T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi*) from 978, in 500 *chüan*, which dealt with religion and the realm of unseen forces. The *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei* (*Outstanding models from the storehouse of literature*) from 1013, in 1,000 *chüan*, categorized historical knowledge about the affairs of government. The *Finest blossoms from the park of literature* (*Wen-yüan ying-hua*) from 987, also in 1,000 *chüan*, anthologized earlier belletrist literature. A *History of the Five Dynasties* (*Chiu wu-tai shih*) was commissioned and revised editions of major T'ang historical sources were completed. Projects were launched to print the existing seventeen dynastic histories and to issue a definitive printed edition of the Classics.¹⁵ Such efforts brought scholars to court, but their significance

¹² David L. McMullen, "Historical and literary theory in the mid-eighth century," in *Perspectives on the T'ang*, ed. Arthur F. Wright and Denis C. Twitchett (New Haven, 1973), pp. 307-42.

¹³ Wang Ying-lin, *Yü-bai* (Taipei, 1964) 38, p. 31.

¹⁴ Peter K. Bol, "*This culture of ours*": *Intellectual transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford, 1992), pp. 151-5.

¹⁵ Bol, "*This culture of ours*," pp. 152-3.

lay in what was implied by the fact of having done them: that the Sung, having unified north and south, was taking responsibility for the cultural heritage, for *Ssu-wen* or "This Culture of Ours," and had proclaimed itself the rightful successor to all preceding dynasties.

Against this compilatory style of court scholarship was the later T'ang model of idealistic writing represented by the "Ancient Style"¹⁶ of Han Yü and Liu Tsung-yüan (773–819). The Ancient Style was a way of learning and a way of writing that was inherently polemical. Its practitioners called upon *shih* to seek the "Way of the Sages" (*Sheng-jen chih tao*) who had created civilization and to write in a fashion that demonstrated that they had absorbed the values of the ancients and were prepared to apply them to the present day. But if they were to do so, Han Yü had told the scholars of his day, each had to be his own man and break with the conventions of the times. The Ancient Style could justify being exclusive rather than inclusive, polemical rather than accommodative. It could justify breaking with tradition in order to establish a truer continuity with antiquity by using the "Way of the Sages" of antiquity to save the age, which could mean saving it from those who held power at court. Yao Hsüan's *The best of literature* (*Wen cui*) from 1011, an anthology of post-An Lu-shan rebellion T'ang writing that gave pride of place to the "Ancient Style," presented itself as an alternative to all those anthologies that modeled themselves on the *Selections from refined literature* (*Wen hsiian*), principal among which was none other than the recently compiled *Finest blossoms from the park of literature*.

Thus in the midst of a growing consensus that Sung should establish a civil order managed by men schooled in textual traditions and possessed of literary skill, there were those who argued that merely the fact of it being *wen* was not enough, it had to be *good wen*, and that good *wen* meant the Ancient Style because it alone came from a true devotion to the highest of human ideals. One of the first to gain fame for this stance was Liu K'ai (947–1000), a *chin-shih* degreeholder who never became a court official. Liu K'ai constructed himself as the champion and successor of Han Yü and Liu Tsung-yüan. His chose his final name, K'ai, with the meaning "to open," to announce his conviction that, like Han, he had apprehended the Way of the Sages for himself and was now ready to "open" the way for his times, "so that past and present proceed through me."¹⁷ A critic objected that Liu narrowly promoted the ancient style at the expense of a broader mastery of the textual tradition and made

¹⁶ In the eleventh century, *ku-wen* comes to mean discursive prose written in a style that recalls ancient texts and containing content that applies the ideals of antiquity to the present. In Han Yü's time, however, it is not clear that there was a dichotomy between prose and poetry. The translation "Ancient Style" should not be taken to mean that "style" alone mattered.

¹⁷ Liu K'ai, *Ho-tung hsien-sheng chi* (*San-Sung jen-chi* ed.) 2, p. 5b. For a discussion of Liu's views, see Bol, "This culture of ours", pp. 162–5.

a point of being different from the age. "Judge me in terms of the Ancient Way," Liu wrote to him, "and you will see that my *wen* is without error, for my way is the Way of Confucius, Mencius, Yang Hsiung, and Han Yü and my *wen* is the *Wen* of Confucius, Mencius, Yang Hsiung, and Han Yü."¹⁸ From Liu's perspective the Way of the Sages could be applied in any age; it was not contingent on history, and he urged Emperor Chen-tsung to completely reorganize the political system and "establish new policies."¹⁹ Wang Yü-ch'eng (954–1006), who did have a career at court but also a reputation as a political critic, argued that only writing that was based on the Classics and the five moral norms deserved to be called *wen*, for only men whose learning was based on the Classics would govern with benevolence and righteousness.²⁰

Behind Ancient Style claims were ideas about personal transformation. Liu K'ai contended that one should learn to be like a sage rather than imitating the Classics or laboring over commentaries. Rather than studying the texts with which the sages transformed people, he told his readers, become a source oneself of the texts that would guide others. To be a sage meant to see the whole, and thus to respond to problems by making clear the proper role of any part. Do not imitate the sage's responses; understand the attitudes that generated them, and be the sage oneself. One could be a sage because these attitudes were natural to the human mind: benevolence (*jen*) was simply the instinctive familial feeling which kept people from separating and righteousness (*i*) was the sense of systematic organization which allowed one to see what was proper to each thing.²¹ Such ideas explained why a *shih* with *wen* could play a mediating role between ancient ideals and present circumstances, between the court above and the populace below, another student of Han and Liu, Chang Yung (946–1015) explained, for those who grasped the Way of the Sages were the ones who could decide how social roles, rituals, and political principles of antiquity could be given new form in the present.²² Ancient Style advocates like Chang and his contemporary T'ien Hsi (940–1003) decried imitation; it was necessary to understand the Way for oneself if one was to guide the world under present circumstances. T'ien was willing to include all textual traditions on the grounds that culture, like Heaven-and-Earth, had both constant patterns and variations. The scholar who could "thread them all on a

¹⁸ Liu K'ai, *Ho-tung hsien-sheng chi* 1, pp. 10b–11b.

¹⁹ T'o T'o (Togto) et al., eds., *Sung shih* (hereafter *SS*) (Peking, 1977) 440, pp. 13025–7.

²⁰ Wang Yü-ch'eng, *Hsiao-ch'u chi* (*Kuo-hsiieh chi-pen ts'ung-shu*) 19, pp. 266–7; 19, p. 269; and Ch'en Chih-o, "Lüeh-lun Sung-ch'u ku-wen yün-tung te liang-chung ch'ing-hsiang," in *Sung-shih yen-chiu lun-wen-chi: 1982 nien nien-hui pien-k'an*, ed. Teng Kuang-ming and Li Chia-chü (Cheng-chou, 1984), pp. 431–51.

²¹ Liu, *Ho-tung hsien-sheng chi* 5, pp. 5a–9b.

²² Chang Yung, *Kuai-yai chi* (*SKCS* ed.) 10, p. 11a; 7, pp. 14b–15a.

single strand" was prepared to become one with the process of creation itself, for then his character would transcend its limitations, his responses to events would be true to his ennobled nature, and whatever he wrote would be spontaneously orderly, integrated and appropriate. For T'ien, Ancient Style learning promised a way to create things in culture just as cosmos did in the natural world.²³

Although later times would reduce the Ancient Style to a manner of writing prose and treat its proponents as mere literary men, in their own times they were the creative force in "Confucian" thought. We have confirmation of this from an unexpected quarter, the monk Chih-yüan (976–1022), a man young enough to be a student of those discussed above, who declared that learning to write in the Ancient Style was what "learning to be a *ju*" ought to mean and taught it to other monks. For Chih-yüan the Ancient Style was integrally tied to an intellectual position, it was not merely a style. To practice it required illuminating in one's mind the "Ancient Way" of Confucius, being able to change with the times yet maintain continuity with antiquity, producing writings that would transform others, and thus saving the age and setting government on the right path.²⁴

However, the Liu K'ais of the world were not yet the dominant voices. In the 1010s and 1020s those belonged to such prolific and talented court scholars as Yang I (974–1020), whose sophistication and erudition in literary composition, rather than moral engagement, was thought to represent the kind of literary talent that the court ought to value and that *shih* ought to master if they wished to be successful in the examinations. This helps explain why, when a new generation of scholars took up the Ancient Style in the 1030s, they saw themselves as rediscovering something that had been forgotten, and why they combined advocacy of the Ancient Style with an attack on Yang I and all he represented.²⁵

FROM LEARNING TO POLITICS: THE FAN CHUNG-YEN FACTION

The historiography of Sung thought for the most part begins with Fan Chung-yen (989–1052) and his supporters, who, beginning in the mid-1020s, began to call for a government that would put the Way of the Sages into practice. They gained power only briefly, in 1043–4, and although their program,

²³ T'ien Hsi, *Hsien-p'ing chi* (SKCS ed.) 2, pp. 10b–13a. Also see Bol, "This culture of ours", pp. 158–60.

²⁴ T'ao Ch'iu-ying and Yü Hsing, eds., *Sung Chin Yüan wen-lun hsüan* (Peking, 1984), pp. 16–18. For a fuller discussion, see Albert Welter, "A Buddhist response to the Confucian revival: Tsan-ning and the debate over *wen* in the early Sung," in *Buddhism in the Sung*, ed. Peter Gregory and Daniel A. Getz Jr. (Honolulu, 1999), pp. 21–61.

²⁵ Bol, "This culture of ours", pp. 161–2.

later known as the Ch'ing-li Reform (*Ch'ing-li hsin-cheng*), was immediately discontinued they had a lasting impact on literati consciousness. The reformers aspired to translate a particular style of learning, the Ancient Style, into an effective political program and they used their own well-publicized commitment to that learning to justify their effort to gain power at court. Moreover, their writings promoted a vision of what government should do and offered literati a higher purpose for their times and the dynasty they served: the creation of a state that would work for the material welfare of all and create a common culture.²⁶

Beginning in 1025 Fan began to call on the court to change its learning and its policies. The key, he argued, was to change the *wen* of the times, the style of writing, from the current refined "Six Dynasties" (222–589) manner of refined parallelism and writing concerned with its own appearance to the style of the Three Dynasties of antiquity (*San-tai*) and writing that sought to transform the world. This was the basis, he argued, for once this choice was made then the ruler would find that the right men to help transform society were those who took their models from antiquity. The ruler had to choose. He could set out to transform society through instruction (*chiao-hua*) or he could continue on the mistaken course of practicing nonaction and noninterference (*wu-wei*).²⁷

The Ancient Style vision and the Classics

Han Yü's "On the Origin of the Way" provided an intellectual, literary, and political model for the reformers. Han Yü's basic argument was that concepts like the "way" and "morality" were not real in themselves but a matter of definition. So the real issue was what literati should use to arrive at a definition that would work to the benefit of all. The essay was his answer to the question "What is the source for the way we should follow?" The answer was antiquity,

²⁶ For an account of this period, see James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien), "An early Sung reformer: Fan Chung-yen," in *Chinese thought and institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago, 1967), pp. 105–131; and *Ou-yang Hsiu: An eleventh-century Neo-Confucianist* (Stanford, 1967); also Bol, "This culture of ours", pp. 166–201. The tradition of beginning Sung intellectual history with the Fan group began as early as Chu Hsi and was adopted by the *Sung Yüan hsiieh-an* (*Records of Sung and Yüan Confucians*). See also, for example, Morohashi Tetsuji, *Jugaku no mokuteki to Soju: Keireki Keigen shi byaku-rokujunenkan no katsudo* (Tokyo, 1929); Liu Fu-sheng, *Pei Sung chung-ch'i ju-hsiieh fu-hsing yüan-tung* (Taipei, 1991); Hsü Hung-hsing, *Ssu-hsiang te chuan-hsing* (Shanghai, 1996), and William Theodore de Bary, "A reappraisal of Neo-Confucianism," in *Studies in Chinese thought*, ed. Arthur F. Wright (Chicago, 1953), pp. 81–111. On the Ancient Style movement during this period, see Ho Chi-p'eng, *Pei Sung te ku-wen yüan-tung* (Taipei, 1992).

²⁷ Fan Chung-yen, *Fan Wen-cheng kung chi* (SPTK) 7, pp. 5b–11b; 8, p. 5b; 8, p. 10a–b; 9, p. 2b. See also Fan's essays on these subjects, 5, pp. 9b–13b.

when the sage kings created political, social, cultural, and economic institutions and wove them together into an integrated order that met the common needs and desires of the populace. They created rulers and armies to lead and protect the people, and clothing, food, and housing that brought them out of a state of competition with animals. They created specialized roles to help them: craftsman and traders to make and circulate goods and doctors to cure their ills. They had instituted the means of human community with rites and music, weights and measures, laws and punishments, walls and guards. They created writing and texts; they created government and hierarchy. The other part of Han's message was that literati had lost sight of this model and the values that supported it, first due to the attacks of other schools of thought in Mencius' time and later due to their infatuation with Buddhism and Taoism, which turned their attention away from thinking about how family, society, and politics could be made to serve the common good. The point of individual cultivation was not transcendence. The point of "correcting the mind and making the intentions sincere," Han argued, was to "accomplish something" (*yu wei*).²⁸

For Han and those who looked back to him, antiquity represented the possibility of perfecting this world. Part of that task involved ending the influence of religion in society, and part of it was constructing a social order different from that of the present. One of the striking things about Han's essays is that it is an overall interpretation of what "antiquity" meant based on many different texts, rather than being a mere citation or elaboration of passages from the Classics. In this sense it represented a shift in intellectual authority from the Classics to the interpretation of the Classics by particular individuals.

Fan's supporters explained what this meant in their own writings during the 1030s and 1040s. In doing so they transformed the study of the Classics from the mastery of commentary tested in the "various fields" examinations to a means of discovering larger principles that applied equally to past and present. And they encouraged a new style of teaching, one in which students and teacher learned to investigate the meaning of the Classics for themselves and discuss how what they found should be applied to the world in which they lived. The most famous of the new-style teachers was Hu Yüan, who entered Fan's camp as a prefectural teacher and eventually became one of the stars of an expanded Imperial University (*T'ai-hsiieh*). Although Hu lectured extensively on the Classics his greatest influence was as a teacher who taught students to

²⁸ Han Yü, *Han Ch'ang-li chi*, ed. Chu Hsi (Hong Kong, 1964) 3.11, pp. 59–63. Discussed in Charles Hartman, *Han Yü and the T'ang search for unity* (Princeton, 1986), pp. 145–62; and Bol, "This culture of ours", pp. 128–31.

think for themselves about what the Classics meant and to investigate ways in which they could use government to improve society, whether in military affairs or in water conservancy.²⁹

An example of this new style of interpretation, which like the Ancient Style had its origins in Han Yü's times, is the famous commentary of Sun Fu (992–1057) on the *Spring and autumn annals* (*Ch'un-chiu tsun-wang fa-wei*). Sun, who had become a protégé of Fan's in the 1020s, both illustrated what it meant to seek the Way of the Sages and reached conclusions that lent support for political reform. The message of the *Annals* as Sun understood it was that China's continued existence depended on protecting itself from barbarian invasion, but that this was only possible by rejuvenating its own civilization, for it was the strength of that, not military power, that would force foreign enemies to accept its superiority. Thus rejuvenating that civilization had to be the primary goal, and to that end the political elite needed to be united under a strong central authority that shared this goal.³⁰

The T'ang dynasty's official interpretation of the Classics, the *Correct meanings of the Five Classics*, had aimed to create a unified view of the Classics by synthesizing the pre-T'ang exegetical tradition in a subcommentary on a single orthodox commentary. In contrast, during the course of the eleventh century, literati increasingly wrote their own commentaries on various classics in order to explain what they thought the sages meant, often giving short shrift to earlier interpretations. As they cleared away the accumulation of interpretations in their search for original meanings they raised doubts about the very texts they believed gave them access to antiquity and the sages, and began to pare and alter them to fit their own ideas.³¹ Ou-yang Hsiu, a Fan loyalist, attacked traditions of interpretation in his *The original meanings of the Book of poetry* (*Shih pen i*) from the 1050s.³² More famous was his repeated critique of the *Book of changes*, beginning in the 1030s. In order to argue that the Way of the Sages was guided by their understanding of human needs, rather than by an effort to fit themselves to the patterns of Heaven-and-Earth, Ou-yang argued that "The ancient Classic of Confucius has been lost" and that Confucius had nothing to do with the tradition of cosmological speculation that was part of the *Changes*.³³ However, Sung

²⁹ For Hu Yüan's pedagogy and classics scholarship, see Hsü, *Ssu-hsiang te chuan-hsing*, pp. 296–325.

³⁰ Sun Fu, *Ch'un-ch'iu tsun wang fa wei* (T'ung-chih t'ang ching-chieh 1873); Alan Thomas Wood, *Limits to autocracy: From Sung Neo-Confucianism to a doctrine of political rights* (Honolulu, 1995), pp. 81–110.

³¹ Yeh Kuo-liang, *Sung ren yi jing gai jing kao, Wen-shih congkan* (Taipei, 1980).

³² Steven van Zoeren, *Poetry and personality: Reading, exegesis, and hermeneutics in traditional China* (Stanford, 1991); and Bol, "This culture of ours", pp. 199–201.

³³ Kidder Smith Jr., Peter K. Bol, Joseph A. Adler, and Don J. Wyatt, *Sung dynasty uses of the I Ching* (Princeton, 1990), pp. 29–42. On Hu Yüan's commentary on the *Changes* that supported the Fan party,

skepticism toward received texts and interpretations was not, I think, a sign of a new empirical scholarship of the sort found in the Evidential Learning of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Rather, it was part of a search in antiquity and the Classics for universal value to believe in.

The reform program and its implications

The writings of Fan's faction prior to 1043 announced its goals. Li Kou's (1009–59) "On ritual," for example, set out a vision of antiquity in terms of a broad concept of ritual as an integrated order, created through government institutions that regulated and improved socioeconomic and cultural life. For Li the historical experience of the Han and T'ang offered no worthwhile lessons and Buddhism and Taoism were obstacles to correct thought.³⁴ Ou-yang Hsiu's "Essay on fundamentals" also called for an activist state, one capable of gathering the fiscal resources necessary to defend the country and transform society.³⁵ The true "degradation of the Confucians," Sun Fu wrote, was to serve merely as administrators, to ignore the sage kings' fundamental ideas, and to go along with honoring "barbarian" Buddhism and Taoism.³⁶ Sun Fu pointed out that it was the activist path of Yao, Shun, and Yü that literati should follow – not all the models from antiquity were right, such as the "nonaction" associated with Huang-ti, Fu Hsi, and Shen Nung.³⁷ For Shih Chieh (1005–45) it was both the Buddhism and Taoism and the literary style of Yang I that kept the age from seeing the Way of the Sages.³⁸ What literati should learn from antiquity, Shih insisted, was the necessity of the systematic and coherent arrangement of all affairs into a single system.³⁹

The Fan group set out to moralize politics, with it being the moral party against the amoral careerists. Rather than deflecting the charge of factionalism, they embraced it. As Ou-yang Hsiu explained in his famous essay "On parties" (*P'eng-tang lun*): only "superior men" (*chün-tzu*) were capable of forming friendships based on the Way and they would necessarily be opposed by "inferior men" (*hsiao-jen*) who joined together only when their self-interest was

see Hon Tze-ki, "Northern Sung 'Yijing' exegesis and the formation of Neo-Confucianism" (diss., University of Chicago, 1992), pp. 66–112. For a survey of fifty-six of the 207 Sung commentaries on the *Changes*, see Wang Chi-hsi, "Pei Sung i-hsüeh k'ao" (M.A. thesis, Kuo-li Taiwan ta-hsüeh, 1978).

³⁴ Li Kou, *Li Kou chi* (Peking, 1981), pp. 7–9. On Li Kou, see Hsieh Shan-yüan, *The life and thought of Li Kou, 1009–1059* (San Francisco, 1979); and Teraji Jun, "Ri Kō no rei-shisō to sono rekishiteki igi: Hokusō jidai chuki no jie jinushiso no shisō," *Shigaku kenkyū* 118 (1973), pp. 38–48.

³⁵ Ou-yang Hsiu *ch'üan-chi* (Taipei, 1961) 17, pp. 121–4 and *wai-chi* 8, pp. 411–13.

³⁶ Sun Fu, *Sun Ming-fu hsiao-chi* (SKCS), "Ju ju." ³⁷ Sun, *Sun Ming-fu hsiao-chi*, "Wu-wei chih."

³⁸ Shih Chieh, *Ts'u-lai Shih hsien-sheng wen-chi* (Peking, 1984) 5, pp. 60–4; 10, pp. 116–17; 19, p. 221.

³⁹ See, for example, his description of the ancient system in "The origins of disorder" and "Returning to the Ancient System"; Shih, *Ts'u-lai Shih hsien-sheng wen-chi* 5, pp. 64–6; and 6, pp. 68–9.

at stake. Antiquity and history proved that the fate of the dynasty depended upon putting the superior men in power – they were loyal and trustworthy, they had integrity, they cultivated themselves and served the state with one Way and one mind.⁴⁰

When Fan Chung-yen and two other senior officials, Han Ch'i (1008–75) and Fu Pi (1004–83), were finally given the chance to make policy in 1043, half of their proposals were aimed at enabling literati who shared their views to gain the upper hand in the bureaucracy. They called for promotion on the basis of merit rather than seniority, limiting the right of high officials to gain official rank for their descendants, favoring examination degreeholders for high office, changing the examination system to favor men with a record of ethical conduct and a commitment to activist government, building local schools, improving the quality of local officials, and providing local officials with an adequate income. Staffing local government was essential to their aims, for they planned to increase agricultural production by having local government undertake water conservancy and land reclamation projects, to cancel tax arrears from the previous reign, and to reform the labor service system which burdened leading local families with the costs of tax collection and administrative support. In addition they called for improving national defense and requiring that all edicts and laws be followed by local officials.⁴¹

The reformers' program, like their vision of antiquity, was a top-down undertaking, in which government would transform society, and literati, having demonstrated their ideological commitment through their writing, would serve in government. Yet this was not a resurrection of the imperial vision of T'ang, in which the court would dominate neighboring peoples, serve as the highest models of culture, be the apex of the social hierarchy, control the distribution of wealth, and command the economic and social lives of its subjects. Rather, Fan's group conceived of a common moral culture, which needed to be defended militarily against foreign encroachment but whose relations with foreign states would be defined by cultural superiority rather than conquest. Domestically it took into account the growth of the south, not by trying to limit access to power through ranking great clans, as T'ang had once done, but by arguing that being a *shih* was a matter of education rather than birth, and by encouraging greater participation in the examination system while reducing hereditary privilege. It envisioned an economic policy of investing in local agricultural infrastructure and reducing the tax burden of local elites, rather than trying to restore state command over land and labor.

⁴⁰ Ou-yang, *Ou-yang Hsiu ch'üan-chi* 17, p. 124.

⁴¹ Fan, *Fan Wen-cheng kung chi* 1, pp. 14a–15a; Liu, "An early Sung reformer: Fan Chung-yen."

The fact that Fan's group deployed antiquity as a justification for their vision, denigrated the Han and T'ang periods, and saw themselves as offering a new beginning suggests that they also saw their vision of an integrated social order and centralized polity as something quite different from the imperial style of Han and T'ang. And although the reformers saw government as the vehicle for an order of things in which the political and cultural were united – hardly a new idea – they in fact supposed that it was culture, through the circulation of writing and scholarship intended to form literati opinion, and the leaders of culture, those scholars who gained followings among the literati, that would guide politics. An eleventh-century examination question put the issue thus:

The men with whom the Son of Heaven (*f'ien-tzu*) shares the world under Heaven all come from the literati (*shih*). The *tao* with which the literati serve the ruler and do things for the populace all come from what they learn. Thus the ruler's selection of literati is a serious matter and, because it is serious, there are rules for it; what the literati learn is a serious matter and, because it is serious, there are also rules for it.⁴²

The Fan group appealed to all those who thought that the literati should decide the rules of learning for themselves. And this meant, as some noted unhappily at the time, that the court had lost its ability to control cultural discourse.⁴³ Ultimately it would not regain it.

The Fan group drew intellectual boundaries for good learning narrower than was literati practice. The most obvious was their rhetorical militancy against Buddhism. There were literati who continued to admire Buddhism as a social institution and as justification for morality; or who espoused a Taoistic politics of noninterference in society; or who held that Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist traditions were compatible. On the Buddhist side there were monks who were sympathetic to reform but also defended Buddhism. The monk Ch'i-sung (1007–72), for example, wrote in the Ancient Style, attracted literati followers, and had contact with men like Li Kou and Ou-yang Hsiu.⁴⁴ Against their claim that the Way of the Sages was adequate to teach men how to be “good,” he argued that true values were ultimately internal, and thus something that Buddhists had a special understanding of. The ways of Buddhists and of the Confucians were “on one thread, but both were necessary.”⁴⁵ The reformers also challenged assumptions widespread among the *ju*. First, they denied that human beings were endowed with internal

⁴² Hsü Chi, *Chieh hsiao chi* (SKCS) 29, p. 11b.

⁴³ Su Ch'e, *Lung ch'uan lüeh-chih* (SKCS) 1, p. 11a–b.

⁴⁴ Ch'i-sung, *T'an-chin wen-chi* (SPTK) 10, p. 4a.

⁴⁵ See, for example, “On the Origins of Instruction,” in Ch'i-sung, *T'an-chin wen-chi* 1, pp. 1a–12a. Chiang I-pin, *Sung-tai ju shih tiao-be lun chi p'ai-fou lun chih yen-chin* (Taipei, 1988), pp. iv, 4–9; Bol, “*This culture of ours*”, pp. 406–7.

guides or determining qualities. Ou-yang Hsiu saw no need to inquire into human nature (*hsing*) and destiny (*ming*); to cultivate themselves and govern others literati required guides that were external to the self. Second, they rejected the traditional view that the sage kings had modeled the creation of civilization on the workings of Heaven-and-Earth. The Way of the Sages is actually better than Heaven-and-Earth, Shih Chieh opined, because whereas nature is irregular the Way of the Sages is unchanging. Ou-yang Hsiu concurred.⁴⁶ But this was the traditional *ju* position. Third, they asserted that there was a real distinction between the Three Dynasties of antiquity and the empires of Han and T'ang; they could not be blended. Ou-yang's personal revision of the *New history of the Five Dynasties* (*Hsin Wu-tai shih*) illustrated many of these views and condemned its politicians.⁴⁷ But for many of their contemporaries the achievements of T'ang were something the Sung should aspire to, and the court began a revision of the *History of T'ang* (*T'ang-shu*) almost immediately after Fan was dismissed.

It is common to see the Fan group as the beginning of Neo-Confucianism, but it was exactly those who were on the other side of their boundaries, literati who turned to Heaven-and-Earth and who believed in human nature, who would be most closely associated with the rise of *Tao-hsüeh*.

THE SEARCH FOR COHERENT SYSTEMS AND METHODS IN THE MID-ELEVENTH CENTURY

After the end of the reform in 1044 and until the young Emperor Shen-tsung (r. 1067–85) gave his support to Wang An-shih and the New Policies in 1069, the court largely steered clear of identifying itself with any one faction. Among literati intellectuals, however, a range of possibilities were being explored, although they had not yet become clearly marked and antagonistic schools of thought. They had a common point of reference in the Ancient Style idea of a “Way of the Sages” that could be apprehended through learning. This was supposed to be something that was valid despite historical change, could be shared by all who learned, and could guide the institution of an integrated and harmonious social order in practice. They also shared the belief that to understand something correctly was to see how all the parts fit together into a coherent and integrated whole. Behind this belief was the assumption that there was a fundamental unity to things. There were important differences among them, however, and we can distinguish between those who searched

⁴⁶ Smith, Bol, Adler, and Wyatt, *Sung dynasty uses of the I Ching*, pp. 29–42; Shih, *Ts'u-lai Shih hsien-sheng wen-chi* 19, p. 221.

⁴⁷ Wang Gungwu, “Feng Tao: An essay on Confucian loyalty,” in *Confucian Personalities*, ed. Arthur F. Wright and Denis C. Twitchett (Stanford, 1962), pp. 123–45.

for systematic principles for organizing society, for a method of judgment, and for a real foundation for morality.

Systematic principles for organizing society

Wang An-shih and Ssu-ma Kuang were the great spokesmen in a paradigmatic conflict over the political order. Both had begun their careers at the time of the Ch'ing-li reforms, which had inspired Wang and antagonized Ssu-ma. They were opposites in many ways. Wang was from a southern family that had only recently entered the bureaucracy and spent much of his career in the southern provinces; Ssu-ma came from a great family of northern court officials and served mainly at court. Wang made his reputation for his Ancient Style writing and studies of the Classics; Ssu-ma wrote in the same style but was famed for historical studies. Wang aimed to vastly expand the scope of government, making it intervene directly in social and economic life, with the aim of increasing the real wealth of the populace and the revenues of the government; Ssu-ma called for a more limited but effective government that would maintain stability and stop social change. Both assumed that the state led society and was responsible for ensuring that the populace had the right values. The substance of their policies is dealt with in other chapters. Here we shall look at them as men with ideas about how to learn.⁴⁸

Wang An-shih

The older generation of Ancient Style scholars looked at the Classics to find the intentions that had guided the sages in creating civilization. In contrast, Wang An-shih studied them to find the system in what the sages had created, so that it could be done again. He once examined students with this question:

There were root and branch to the sages' ordering of the age. There was what came first and last in their putting it into practice. The problems of the world have been left uncorrected for a long time now; teaching and policy have yet to be made according to the ideas of the sages. We have lost sight of the root, seeking it in the branch; we have taken what should come last and put it first. And thus the world careens toward disorder. Now if it is so that the world will not be ordered except through the means the sages used to achieve order, then to be considered a true *shih* one must pay attention to how the sages achieved order. I want you gentlemen to relate in full the root and branch of how the sages achieved order and what they did first and last.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ This section is based on Peter K. Bol, "Government, society, and state: On the political visions of Ssu-ma Kuang and Wang An-shih," in *Ordering the world: Approaches to state and society in Sung dynasty China*, ed. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 128–92; and "This culture of ours", chapters 6–7.

⁴⁹ Wang An-shih, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* (Peking, 1959) 70, p. 747, third question.

Moreover, he supposed, precisely because this was a universal and coherent system, that if he had understood it correctly and could express it systematically and coherently in his writing, then it could be applied successfully in policy.⁵⁰ For Wang what could be composed in texts could, if it he had gotten it right, also be instituted in life.

An important example of Wang's approach to understanding antiquity is in effect his answer to the question quoted above. This is his "Ten-thousand-word memorial" of 1058, which explained that order could only be achieved by creating a system of integrally related institutions.⁵¹ Wang's argument begins from the premise that the key to transforming the present is to enlarge the pool of talent; that is, literati who understand the intentions of the sage kings. The first concern of government must be to increase that pool and to do that one needs an institutionalized program of education. And that in turn requires a series of changes in social, economic, and bureaucratic institutions. In short, reform requires a systematic transformation of the institutional system.

The memorial explains how the parts were necessarily connected in antiquity, but not in the present, and calls for careful planning to implement the required reforms, in the first place with regard to the literati. First there must be education for all through state schools which teach all aspects of the work of government, ethical conduct, and the guiding ideas of the sage kings. Second, there must be an economic system that guarantees that all receive material support and can maintain the way of life appropriate to their station, using punishments to deal with deviance. This will "unify social customs and bring about order." Third, the most talented should be selected through the school system and given probationary duties and titles, thus allowing them to prove their competence by helping teach and support others. Finally, those who proved their competence should be assigned ranks and office commensurate with their talents, and given long tenures unfettered by regulations so that they could develop local projects. In this scheme the divisions between government and society, the political and the cultural, and public and private spheres disappear. Schools, not government offices, become the center of local society and the capital is more important as a place for generating new policy initiatives than as the locus of the emperor and his court. In fact the ruler and dynastic house are largely irrelevant to this vision. In antiquity this system included everyone, Wang held, but in the present it would

⁵⁰ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 77, p. 812. For a similar statement on composing *wen* that can be applied in the present, see 77, p. 811. For its application to institutional reform in 1058, see 39, pp. 410–11.

⁵¹ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 39, pp. 410–23. For later restatements, see 41, p. 438; and 39, p. 423. The memorial is fully translated in Henry Raymond Williamson, *Wang An-shih: A Chinese statesman and educationalist of the Sung dynasty* (London, 1935), Volume 1, pp. 48–84.

be enough to apply it to the literati (*shih*), and it was toward them primarily that Wang directed his ideas about learning. Teaching literati *how* they should learn, Wang explained elsewhere, would unify them and show them their true purpose.⁵² The model of antiquity is a society in which those in power and those below had the same standards, worthy men were employed, and those who learned were rewarded.⁵³

In writings that circulated prior to his chief councilorship, Wang adopted the typical Ancient Style attitudes toward other ways of thinking about values. He rejected the "nonactivist" rulers of early antiquity.⁵⁴ He denied that literati needed to pay attention to Heaven-and-Earth or seek guidance from some inclusive, natural Way.⁵⁵ He warned against seeing learning only as self-cultivation; the point of "learning for oneself" was to be capable of guiding others.⁵⁶ Nor was it important to attend to issues of what was innate in man.⁵⁷ The fact that Chuang-tzu (fourth century BC) might well be right about things was beside the point, Wang argued, for the goal of the sages was to set common standards that "the average man can meet" and thus to avoid confusion.⁵⁸ Wang was looking for what could be shared.

But what exactly was it that was going to be shared? Wang, like others who believed that antiquity held lessons that could apply to the present, faced the problem of explaining what it was that could be constant through change, how one could find it, and how one could know that he had found it. When Wang asserted that what defined righteousness was not particular models of past righteous men but doing what was right, he faced the question what other source there was for knowing what was right.⁵⁹ The previous generation had continued to speak of the parallel tracks, so to speak, of the *wen* of antiquity and the *tao* of antiquity, a sign perhaps that they had not figured out how ideas could be truly dislodged from the form of their expression. Wang wanted to have it both ways. Antiquity would remain an authoritative model but the

⁵² Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 82, pp. 862–63, school inscription for T'ai-p'ing chou from 1066; cf. 82, p. 858, for the Ch'ien-chou school from 1064–5; 75, p. 794, letter to Ting Yüan-chen. Ibid. 72, p. 768, second letter to Wang Shen-fu.

⁵³ E.g. Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 64, p. 682, "Explaining destiny"; 69, pp. 733–7, "On succeeding," "Selecting talent," "Promoting worthies," and "Assigning responsibilities."

⁵⁴ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 69, p. 731, "On remote antiquity."

⁵⁵ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 68, p. 713, "On Lao-tzu." 72, p. 763, reply to Han Ch'iu-jen.

⁵⁶ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 68, pp. 722–3, "On Yang and Mo." Cf. 72, pp. 766–7, reply to Wang Shen-fu.

⁵⁷ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 72, pp. 765–6, reply to Kung Shen-fu; 64, pp. 679–80, "On Yang [Hsiung] and Mencius." See also "On Hsing," "Hsing and ch'ing," and "The origins of Hsing" in 67, p. 715; 68, pp. 726–7.

⁵⁸ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 68, pp. 725–6, "On Chuang-tzu," second part; cf. 67, pp. 717–18, "Relating the mean."

⁵⁹ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 67, p. 715, "Bravery and Clemency."

lesson of antiquity was that those who imitated the behaviors of a true king were doomed never to be true kings themselves, for the true king knew that he had to change with the times if he was to equal the ancients.⁶⁰ But what was constant if one changed with the times?

If the times are different and he insists upon doing it the same, then what is the same are the traces and what is different is Way . . . For a long time the literati of the age have not known that Way cannot be unified [at the level of] traces . . . The Ways of the sages and worthies all come from one and the same thing [lit. "one"], but if they do not adjust in response to changes in the times they are not worth being called sages and worthies. The sage understands the greater adjustments, the worthy understands the lesser ones.⁶¹

To be true to the constant way requires change. But if so how could literati grasp the Way of the Sages so as to reach shared conclusions that justified implementing a new institutional agenda and forcing changes in social customs?⁶²

Wang's resolution of this dilemma was to see the Way of the Sages as a matter of uncovering and instituting a *system* of relationships that could be maintained over time and could accommodate changing circumstances. To learn from antiquity thus meant creating a system that was capable of changing with the times without falling apart. The sages "instituted ritual" systematically in response to changing historical circumstances and the social mores of the day, he argued in "Rituals that are not ritual."⁶³ Elsewhere he made a similar point: the systematic institution of ritual is the true meaning of imitating antiquity, not the piecemeal adoption of those ancient rituals that seemed appropriate to the present.⁶⁴ For Wang ritual was a coherent system that took into account human needs and instinctive tendencies.⁶⁵ Wang took a similar approach to explaining why the Classics as redacted by Confucius could be fundamental to knowledge about how to govern in the present. "The Master was wiser than Yao and Shun," Wang writes, because Confucius "collected all the affairs of the sages and greatly completed a system for a myriad generations." The Classics thus allowed the observer to see a system develop through cumulative change better than the ancients who had lived through it.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 67, p. 714, "King and Hegemon."

⁶¹ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 69, pp. 730-1, "An official and recluse."

⁶² On the necessity of changing social customs, see Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 69, pp. 737-8, "On customs" and "Encouraging habits."

⁶³ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 67, pp. 713-14.

⁶⁴ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 70, p. 748, sixth question.

⁶⁵ Hsia Chang-pu has argued that after 1068 Wang changed his view of human nature to argue that good values were innate; see "Wang An-shih ssu-hsiang yü Meng-tzu te kuan-hsi," in *Chi-nien Ssu-ma Kuang Wang An-shih*, p. 315. I read Wang as saying that his position can incorporate a notion of innateness.

⁶⁶ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 67, pp. 711-12.

We know something about Wang's method of reading the Classics from his commentary on the *Rites of the Chou*, prefaces to commentaries and scattered writings. In essence, he assumes that the parts of a text are set in a coherent arrangement, in which one part follows necessarily from the other in a relationship of "root and branch" (i.e. one thing is either fundamental to or dependent on the existence of another) or "first and last" (i.e. the logical sequence in a series). The identification of these relationships proves that he has found the meaning or value of the thing in question as part of a larger whole. This procedure involves multiple ad hoc connections, based on appeals to common knowledge rather than rigorous logic. The following is from his explanation of the sequence of the first poems in the *Book of poetry*:

The governance of the king begins in the family. The orderly arrangement in the family is based in the correct [relationship] between husband and wife. The correct [relationship] between husband and wife depends on seeking a noble lady possessed of virtue as consort to pair with the superior man. Therefore [the *Chou-nan* sequence] begins with "The ospreys." Now the reason a noble lady is possessed of virtue is that, in the family, her basis is in the affairs of woman's craft work, therefore this is followed by "The cloth-plant" . . .⁶⁷

Wang's preface to the *Songs* claims that by imitating the *wen* of their language the superior man is stimulated; "by following the sequence of their Way the sage is completed."⁶⁸ Writing about the *Changes* Wang became aware that with his method he was at last able to see the real meaning of the text through its sequence, and disavowed some of his earlier work.⁶⁹ He applies this method to the "Great Plan" (Hung-fan) in the *Book of documents* (*Shu-ching*), claiming to have broken free of centuries of tradition and found its meaning,⁷⁰ and to the *Rites of the Chou*.⁷¹

Wang's growing conviction that the discovery of a systematic arrangement into which he could fit all the parts was proof that he had organized things correctly, that the coherence of the arrangement was the grounds for meaning, eventually led him to conclude that the systems he saw in the Classics had grounds beyond the Classics themselves and that the search for systems did not

⁶⁷ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 66, p. 701. Shimizu Kiyoshi has made this point in his discussion of the "Explanation"; see his "Ô An-seki no 'shu-nan shi ji-kai' ni tsuite," in *Uno Tetsuto sensei hakuju shukuga Tôyôgaku ronsô* (Tokyo, 1969), pp. 491–510. See also "Explanation of the airs of the states," Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* pp. 1071–2, and his discussion of the *Songs* in the reply to Han Ch'iu-jen, 72, pp. 761–2.

⁶⁸ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 84, pp. 878–9.

⁶⁹ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 72, p. 764, reply to Han Ch'iu-jen. Wang's "Explanation of the images in the *Changes*," presents the sixty-four hexagrams as a coherent sequence teaching the "way of the superior man"; see Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 65, pp. 697–700. Cf. 63, pp. 668, 671; and 66, p. 708.

⁷⁰ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 71, p. 759.

⁷¹ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 84, p. 878, preface to the commentary on the *Institutes of Chou*.

have to be limited to the Classics. It is at this point that Wang lays claim to exactly those grounds he had earlier dismissed: innate qualities and Heaven-and-Earth. And it is also in this context that we see him using the term *li*, usually translated as "pattern" or "principle," to refer to what was constant through change. He could use different texts to explain each other because in "such learning as mine . . . their pattern is the same."⁷² Writing in 1065 he argued that the most important aspects of the Classics were grounded in the human mind, and thus ineradicable even when Ch'in (221–206 BC) burnt the books.

The morality of the Former Kings came from the patterns of *hsing-ming* and the patterns of *hsing-ming* came from men's minds. The *Poetry* and *Documents* could accord with and reach [men's minds], they could not take away what they had and give them what they did not have. Although the Classics were lost, what came from men's minds was still present.⁷³

This systematicity was inherent in the natural order of things and there was a unity of "the completeness of Heaven-and-Earth and the larger structure of the ancients" which could be achieved through intuitive understanding (*shen*).⁷⁴ Wang's *Explanations of characters* (*Tzu shuo*), written to help New Policies schools teach the new commentaries, argued that the particular structure of each character had moral significance, for the structure was "based on what is so-of-itself" in spite of the fact that writing was "instituted by men." Writing began with the sages, and although the pool of characters grew and forms and pronunciation changed, the moral significance remained inherent in their structure, once the system was understood, despite changes in script.⁷⁵

Wang did not, however, give up on the Classics. They were the foundation on which a grander system could be built. Toward the end of his life he wrote,

For long the world has not seen the complete Classics. If one were only to read the Classics it would not be enough to know the Classics. I thus read everything, from the hundred schools and various masters to [such medical texts as] the *Nan ching* and *Su wen*, the pharmacopoeia and various minor theories, and I inquire of everyone, down to the farmer and the craftswoman. Only then am I able to know the larger structure (*ta t'i*) of the Classics

⁷² Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sbeng wen-chi* 74, p. 786, reply to Wu Hsiao-tsung.

⁷³ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sbeng wen-chi* 82, p. 859, for the school at Ch'ien-chou.

⁷⁴ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sbeng wen-chi* 66, pp. 706–7, "On the great man."

⁷⁵ Bol, "This culture of ours", pp. 232–3. The *Tzu shuo* is now lost. Fifty-two entries (some of which may be incomplete) have been collected in K'o Chang-i, *Wang An-shih p'ing chuan* (Shanghai, 1933), pp. 242–7. Examples of his method are in his commentary on the *Lao tzu* and the *Chou kuan hsin i*. Winston Lo has written on the importance of this work in Wang's thought; see his "Wang An-shih and the Confucian ideal of inner sageliness," *Philosophy East and West* 26 No. 1 (1976), pp. 41–53; and "Philology: An aspect of Sung rationalism," *Chinese culture* 17 (1976), pp. 1–26. See Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sbeng wen-chi* 84, p. 879 for Wang's preface.

and be free of doubt. The later ages in which we learn are different from the time of the Former Kings. We must do this if we are fully to know the sages.⁷⁶

He also tried to explain the philosophical grounds for his views. In the essay "On Attaining Unity" he asserts that there is a necessary dialectic between the analysis of phenomena and the spiritual intuition of unity (*shen*):⁷⁷

Now if one cannot get the essence of all the meanings under Heaven, then he cannot enter *shen*. [But] if he cannot enter *shen* then he cannot get the essence of all the principles under Heaven . . . This ought to be as one, but [that the passage] must speak of it in dual terms is simply because it is speaking about their sequence.⁷⁸

The sage can do both. The essay opens with what I take to be a straightforward claim for coherence as the test of meaning:

All of the ten thousand things have an ultimate pattern (*chih-li*) to them. If one can get the essence of their pattern he is a sage. The way of getting the essence of their pattern lies simply in attaining their unity. If one attains their unity then all things under Heaven can be apprehended without calculation. The *Changes* says, "Unity attained yet a hundred considerations."^[79] It is speaking of the hundred considerations all reverting to unity. If one is able to attain unity and get the essence of all patterns under Heaven then he can enter *shen*. Once he has entered *shen* then [he has reached] the ultimate of the Way. Now when thus, he is at a moment of "no thought, no action, tranquil and unmoving."^[80] However, there are certainly affairs under Heaven that can be thought about and acted on, thus he must "comprehend their causes."^[81] This is why the sage also values being able to "attain practice."⁸²

Attaining unity, seeing how things form a coherent whole, guarantees that one has determined the pattern for the things in question.

Wang's learning led him to see the possibility of integrating "all under Heaven" into a dynamic system, a grand enterprise that the dynastic house should support. When he became chief councilor (*tsai-hsiang*) he told the emperor, "I certainly wish to aid Your Majesty in accomplishing something (*yu wei*), but today customs and institutions are all in ruin . . . If Your Majesty truly wishes to use me . . . we should first discuss learning so that you are convinced of the necessary connections in what I have learned." And, in response to the emperor's comment that some believed that Wang's learning had not prepared him for practical leadership, "Methods from the Classics (*ching shu*) are the means for correcting the problems of the age (*ching shih-wu*) . . . The

⁷⁶ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 73, p. 779.

⁷⁷ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 66, p. 708. Winston Lo in "Wang An-shih and the Confucian ideal of inner sageliness," pp. 41-53; and K'o, *Wang An-shih p'ing-chuan*, pp. 194-6.

⁷⁸ Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 66, p. 708.

⁷⁹ *Chou I yin-te*, Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series (Taipei, 1966), *Hsi-tz'u chuan* B3.

⁸⁰ Chou i, *Hsi-tz'u chuan* A9. ⁸¹ Chou i, *Hsi-tz'u chuan* B3.

⁸² Wang, *Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi* 66, p. 707.

priority of the moment is to change customs (*p'ien feng-su*) and establish institutions (*li fa-tu*)."⁸³

Ssu-ma Kuang

Ssu-ma Kuang was a conservative in that he thought changed established relationships between state and society would ultimately destroy the whole. Like Wang An-shih he was known for Ancient Style writings in his youth, and although he opposed the Ch'ing-li reformers he shared their doubts about seeking guidance from Heaven-and-Earth or from innate qualities. His version of antiquity made it continuous with later history: the hallmarks of the civilization that resulted from the sage kings' efforts to transform humanity from its original animal state were hierarchical order and property rights, moral instruction and penal law.⁸⁴ For Ssu-ma the structure of government was fundamentally correct and true to its original foundation; the problem was that people did not understand how to make it function correctly.⁸⁵

Ssu-ma Kuang set out to correct this as an official, when as a policy critic at court he unleashed a flood of memorials about what was needed to make the political structure function effectively, and as a scholar, when he set out to demonstrate that his views were proven by history and, ultimately, were in accord with Heaven-and-Earth and had a place for internal cultivation.

In Ssu-ma's scheme of things a polity that was properly maintained should survive forever. His analogy was to a building: the populace was the foundation, the court the beams, the bureaucracy the roof, ritual and law its pillars, the generals its walls, and the armies its lock. This was a static structure, not a dynamic system, and it required that all the members play their assigned roles, and that the ruler as owner, if he wished to pass it on to his descendants, be a good manager. Ssu-ma was generous but repetitive in his advice to the emperors he served. They had three tasks: to assign officials according to competence, to reward achievement, and to punish failure. They also needed to care about the well-being of those who served them, have an understanding of what was right, and be immune from self-serving suasion. Society could survive for a while even when government went wrong because humans were by nature resistant to change, Ssu-ma argued, and thus it was of utmost importance to habituate the populace to behaving in a manner that would preserve order. For Ssu-ma the roles of superior and inferior were the foundation of

⁸³ Huang I-chou, *Hsü tzu-chih ch'ang-pien shih-pu*, 4, p. 3b, in Li T'ao, *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien*.

⁸⁴ Ssu-ma Kuang, *Ssu-ma Wen-cheng kung ch'üan-chia chi* (Wan-yu wen-k'ü ed.) 71, p. 871.

⁸⁵ Ssu-ma, *Ssu-ma Wen-cheng kung ch'üan-chia chi* 71, p. 872, inscription for the temple to Confucius in Wen-hsi hsien.

order, something that he thought had nearly been lost over the course of history, although the Sung founders were on the right track in their attempt to centralize authority.⁸⁶ What Ssu-ma would most object to in the New Policies was that they brought about social change.

Wang An-shih had called for a new integrated understanding of the Classics. Ssu-ma Kuang's vehicle was history. Beginning in the early 1060s he set out to give a systematic understanding of history and its lessons. The lost *Chronological charts* (*Li-nien t'u*) covered the 1,362 years from 403 BC to AD 959.⁸⁷ The *Charts* became the outline for the *Comprehensive mirror for aid in government* (*Tzu-chih t'ung-chien*), which Ssu-ma compiled with the help of Liu Pin (1023–89), Liu Shu (1032–78), and Fan Tsu-yü (1041–98).⁸⁸ Ssu-ma submitted the first section in 1066 with the title *Comprehensive treatise* (*T'ung-chih*), in eight *chüan*, covering the years 403 to 207 BC. On the basis of this the court agreed to fund the longer work we now know as the *Comprehensive mirror for aid in government*, in 294 *chüan*, covering 403 BC–AD 959. The *Mirror* was finally submitted in 1084, together with an "Examination of discrepancies" and a "Table of contents," each in thirty *chüan*. His *Record of examining the past* (*Chi-ku lu*) submitted in 1086 in twenty *chüan* included a section on political events between 960 and 1067 and a review of the period from the first sage king Fu Hsi through 402 BC.⁸⁹ These works were recognized by the court as official works, although Ssu-ma had independent editorial control.⁹⁰

Ssu-ma rejected traditional efforts to define a succession of dynasties as legitimate possessors of Heaven's mandate in accord with the Five Phases, and instead held that dynasties were the result of struggles for power.⁹¹ The point of his historiography was to show that there was a consistent and necessary set of factors according to which polities rose and fell, thus disproving those who argued that the government could remake society. He writes in the introduction to the *Chronological charts* that "The way of order and disorder is threaded by consistency (*i-kuan*) through past and present."⁹² Similarly, in submitting

⁸⁶ Bol, "This culture of ours", pp. 219–22.

⁸⁷ Ssu-ma included the chronological summary of political events from the *Charts* in the *Record of examining the past* (*Chi-ku lu*), which is extant; see Ssu-ma, *Chi-ku lu* 11, p. 63b–15, p. 39a.

⁸⁸ For a discussion of Ssu-ma's methods, see Edwin G. Pulleyblank, "Chinese historical criticism: Liu Chih-chi and Ssu-ma Kuang," in *Historians of China and Japan*, ed. William G. Beasley and Edwin G. Pulleyblank (London, 1961), pp. 151–66; and Wang Te-i, "Ssu-ma Kuang yü *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien*," in *Sung-shih yen-chiu lun-chi*, second collection, Wang Te-i (Taipei, 1972), pp. 1–24.

⁸⁹ Ssu-ma Kuang, *Chi-ku lu* (SPTK).

⁹⁰ Ssu-ma also produced a "private" historical work on Sung history, the *Su-shui chi-wen* in sixteen *chüan* (Taipei, 1970).

⁹¹ Ssu-ma Kuang, *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* (Peking, 1956), 69, pp. 2185–8. The rejection of legitimate succession is found in *ibid.* 69, pp. 2185–8.

⁹² Ssu-ma, *Chi-ku lu* 16, p. 83a.

the *Comprehensive treatise* in 1066, he asserts that the “sources of order and disorder have the same normative structure (*t’i*) in past and present.”⁹³ All the outcomes in the past, for all their variations and particularities, were explained by the same set of principles. “From the beginning of man to the end of Heaven-and-Earth,” he writes in the *Record of examining the past*, “for those who possess the state, although there are myriad kinds of variation, they do not go beyond these.”⁹⁴ Thus Ssu-ma Kuang had also found something that he believed was constant through change and could be understood by others through learning.

Just as Wang’s classical curriculum was intended to train students to think in a certain way, one that supported the New Policies, Ssu-ma’s historical works were meant to inculcate a way of thinking that justified his position. And like Wang’s curriculum his works taught readers what to look for and how to evaluate it. His histories were “mirrors” on the present by providing rulers and ministers with a historical perspective on their own moment, so that they could see the implications and consequences of their choices under the circumstances. The *Chronological charts*, for example, notes the moments when it was still possible to change the outcome and the moments at which the dynasty could no longer be saved.⁹⁵ He showed the literati how to save the state, but he also provided them with the means to know when to give up on it.

The *Comprehensive mirror*, the greatest of all his works, was a history, a primer for learning to think about the polity, and an account of the lessons history taught.⁹⁶ It was composed entirely through the compilation of passages from other texts, with separate notes justifying choices when alternative versions were available, with the exception of almost 200 quotations from earlier writers and Ssu-ma himself which were meant to draw attention to the important lessons from history. What did Ssu-ma mean?⁹⁷

Beginning with his all-important opening analysis of the division of Chin into three states (Han, Wei and Chao) in 403 BC, the *Mirror* sets out Ssu-ma’s vision of the normative order of the polity: a unified hierarchy of political authority. The ruler chooses and delegates authority to his court ministers, they choose and delegate to the level below them. All the way down to the common people everyone exists in a relationship between superior and

⁹³ Ssu-ma, *Ssu-ma Wen-cheng kung ch’üan-chia chi* 17, p. 254.

⁹⁴ Ssu-ma, *Chi-ku lu* 16, p. 86a–86b.

⁹⁵ Examples include the discussion of Eastern Han (25–220), *Chi-ku lu* 13, pp. 112a–113b; Northern Wei (386–534), 14, pp. 26a–28a; Sui (581–618), 14, pp. 37a–38a; and T’ang, 15, pp. 68a–72b. On history as analogy, see Robert M. Hartwell, “Historical analogism, public policy, and social science in eleventh- and twelfth-century China,” *American Historical Review* 76 No. 3 (June 1971), pp. 690–727.

⁹⁶ For a discussion of Ssu-ma’s methods, see Pulleyblank, “Chinese historical criticism,” pp. 151–66.

⁹⁷ See, for example, Chan Ming Kou, “The historiography of the *Tzu-chih t’ung-chien*: A survey,” *Monumenta Serica* 31 (1974–5), pp. 1–38.

inferior. The superior leads, the inferior carries out his duties. If this structure is maintained then the state survives, when it is lost it perishes. In this regard there is no real distinction between a moral "true king" and a hegemon, between civilized and barbarian polities; all stand or fall according to this. In fact this basic principle of hierarchical authority, the core meaning of "ritual," is in some sense more important than any particular polity. The "roles of superior and subordinate" are unequal. The ruler can dismiss his ministers for not performing, but ministers cannot dismiss their ruler. Rather, they must try to correct his mind by explaining the larger structure to him so that he can clearly perceive what is right and wrong. The ruler is responsible – if the *Mirror* shows anything it is that bad rulers have dominated history – but ministers must be guided by principles. Like the sages, they must be able to detect and thwart at an incipient stage the kinds of change which will threaten the structure if allowed to go unchecked. However diminished the ruler's authority may be, if he authorizes policies which undermine this hierarchy he is in fact destroying it himself. Ssu-ma begins the *Mirror* in 403 BC with the king of Chou's granting the request of the three powerful lords of Chin to divide Chin among them precisely because he sees this as the moment that the Chou was lost, because by authorizing the division the king abrogated his own responsibility and precluded the possibility that others would defend the dynasty (for to do so would have required disobeying his commands). Morally responsible action maintains the received forms of conduct for it is precisely behavior that contravenes the forms that represent the established order that initiates its demise.⁹⁸

Ssu-ma was not a champion of autocratic rule or of blind loyalty to the ruler. The first loyalty of all must be to the structure of authority that makes a polity viable; all else follows from this.⁹⁹ It is, as his memorials make clear, a deeply conservative point of view, one which is unsympathetic to all those forces of change which he saw around him. He buttressed his views in other ways as well. Although at the start of his career he had been hostile to efforts to find grounds for principles in Heaven-and-Earth and human internality, the *Mirror* has several passages which reflect an interest in showing that a correct understanding of Heaven-and-Earth and the mind support his conclusions.¹⁰⁰ In the *Changes*, for example, he saw proof of a systematic parity between Heaven and

⁹⁸ Bol, "This culture of ours", pp. 237–46.

⁹⁹ Anthony William Sariti, "Monarchy, bureaucracy, and absolutism in the political thought of Ssu-ma Kuang," *Journal of Asian Studies* 32 No. 1 (November 1972), pp. 53–76. He takes issue with Hsiao Kung-ch'üan's interpretation of Ssu-ma Kuang's political thought in Hsiao Kung-ch'üan, *Chung-kuo cheng-chih ssu-hsiang shih*, 4 vols. (Taipei, 1964). Chan, "The historiography of the *Tzu-chih i'ung-chien*," is closer to Hsiao.

¹⁰⁰ For example, Ssu-ma, *Tzu-chih i'ung-chien* 291, pp. 9510–13; and 192, pp. 6051–3.

man and a parallel between the moral principles and numerology, all of which he believed supported his view of hierarchy.¹⁰¹ He composed a numerological–cosmological treatise of his own, the *Hidden void* (*Ch'ien-hsü*), in imitation of Yang Hsiung's *Supreme mystery*, a work he believed had shown that the principles of Heaven-and-Earth and the polity were the same.¹⁰²

In retirement in Loyang (1071–85) Ssu-ma Kuang was the leader of the conservative opposition to the New Policies. It is possible that Ssu-ma's friendships with Shao Yung (1011–77), the Ch'eng brothers (Ch'eng Hao and Ch'eng I), and others in Loyang persuaded him to extend the boundaries of his claims to include Heaven-and-Earth.¹⁰³ It may also help explain Ssu-ma's growing interest in the mind and in internal cultivation. "The lesser man orders the traces," Ssu-ma wrote in 1083, "the superior man orders the mind."¹⁰⁴ But his view of the internal was not that of the Ch'engs. To be ethical meant to accept one's lot: talent was given by Heaven and success was fate; one should not think there was a way to guarantee personal success.¹⁰⁵ Personal cultivation was aimed at achieving a state where one would not be distracted by the enticements of social reward (or punishment) but would stick to practicing one's *tao* and according with ritual.¹⁰⁶ He took an interest in the *Doctrine of the mean* but at the same time denied that there was any "innate knowledge from Heaven." Mental cultivation meant training oneself to "go neither too far nor not far enough" in thought and action. The mind was to be kept free of outside influences; for Ssu-ma the *ko-wu* (Ch'eng I's "investigating things") of the "Great Learning" meant "restraining things."¹⁰⁷ Although he later said he found Hsün-tzu (298–238 BC) too narrow, he in fact continued to share his view that human nature was not good, that one should learn and stick to ritual, and he wrote a small work, *Doubting Mencius*, because Mencius encouraged the overthrow of hierarchy.¹⁰⁸

Ssu-ma was unsympathetic to all those forces of change which he saw around him. He believed that commercial growth encouraged social change

¹⁰¹ Ssu-ma Kuang, *I Shuo* (SKCS); see his introduction. ¹⁰² Ssu-ma Kuang, *Ch'ien-hsü* (SPTK).

¹⁰³ For an account of Loyang as a capital of the intellectual opposition to the New Policies, see Michael D. Freeman, "Loyang and the opposition to Wang An-shih: The rise of Confucian conservatism, 1068–1086" (diss., Yale University, 1973).

¹⁰⁴ Ssu-ma, *Ssu-ma Wen-cheng kung ch'üan-chia chi* 74, p. 910. Note that Ssu-ma's new title in 1085 for his memorial on the emperor's duties as ruler, "The essentials of cultivating the mind and ordering the state," did not involve a change in content.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, "Standards for *Shih*" from 1057 and "Heaven and man" from 1074 and 1085 in Ssu-ma, *Ssu-ma Wen-cheng kung ch'üan-chia chi* 74, pp. 906–7; 74, p. 916.

¹⁰⁶ Ssu-ma, *Ssu-ma Wen-cheng kung ch'üan-chia chi* 74, pp. 912–13, "Seeking to be used" in the *Foolish writings*.

¹⁰⁷ Ssu-ma, *Ssu-ma Wen-cheng kung ch'üan-chia chi* 65, pp. 808–9, "Attaining knowledge lies in restraining things."

¹⁰⁸ Bol, "This culture of ours", pp. 234–6.

among the populace, and he saw no need for creating more literati: his ideal reform of the examination system was one in which admission would be based on the number of recommendation letters one was able to obtain from court officials. Yet he shared with Wang An-shih a conviction that there was a totalistic and universal approach to governing human society. This was not a return to the Han and T'ang empires, neither of which lived up to Ssu-ma's standards, or to a grand imperial vision; he opposed an aggressive foreign policy and called for coexistence with foreign states, and would later conclude that it was the desire for empire that had beguiled the emperor into supporting the radical attempt to transform society through the New Policies.¹⁰⁹

The literary defense of judgment and circumstance

Su Shih once commented that Wang An-shih's own writing was not bad at all, it was just that he wanted to make everyone else the same as himself.¹¹⁰ From Su's perspective Wang's writings were one man's opinion and revealed something of the quality of the man, but they were not a blueprint that all should or could follow. Han Yü seems to have taken a similar attitude towards expressing his own ideas; they were not meant to be things for others to imitate. Although the Ancient Style position could lead to dogmatism, it was the creation of literary intellectuals and it had a defensible literary rationale: those who had grasped the values that had guided the ancients with their minds and whose style had been transformed through their encounter with the ancients could stand independently and respond to the events of the world through the lens of their own learning and writing. Having shown they could do it through writing they could be trusted to do it through government. The values that guided the sages would be the values that guided their writing and behavior. This implied a government led by men who were guided by a shared commitment to understanding the Way and who were trying to serve the common good and to deal with problems in a timely manner, rather than government by dogma and program. It further implied a view of political culture as something that was constantly being created and transformed by those who participated in it, rather than one of the participants as subordinating themselves to the demands of the political system.

¹⁰⁹ Bol, "Government, society, and state: On the political visions of Ssu-ma Kuang and Wang An-shih," pp. 177-81.

¹¹⁰ Su Shih, *Su Tung-po chi* (*Kuo-hsiieh chi-pen tsung-shu* ed.) 30, p. 11.

In the years after the Ch'ing-li reform the person who most persuasively defended this point of view was Ou-yang Hsiu. Ou-yang had a broad interest in antiquity, history, and literature. He was a "culturalist" rather than a classicist or historian, for whom the actualities of human experience were of more compelling interest than the search for a system.¹¹¹ Although he had first made his name as a propagandist for reform, in the 1050s Ou-yang produced two works which went counter to the search for universal systems such as found in Wang An-shih and Ssu-ma Kuang.

The *Original meaning of the Songs* is an analysis of how the *Book of songs* came to be and a commentary.¹¹² Ou-yang argues that access to what is "original" in the *Songs* is mediated by the processes of collecting and editing that took place later, and that it is only by understanding this layered process that his times can espy the sensibility of the actual poets. The poems themselves were simply individuals' unselfconscious emotional responses to events without a moral agenda or hidden meaning. Then, second, the poems were collected, classified, ranked, and stored for use on the proper occasion. The third stage was Confucius' editing of the poems. Living in a corrupted world he found in them a means of showing what morally correct responses ought to be. Thus the naive poetry of antiquity came to be a vehicle for morality. The fourth and final stage was the appearance of the exegetical tradition, which tried to reconstruct the classic after its burning in the Ch'in and tried to infer the intent of the poets from the arrangement of the poems (as Wang An-shih did). Ou-yang uses his understanding of the genesis of the classic to revise and emend the exegetical tradition, while stressing that grasping the intentions of the poets requires understanding the sensibility with which they responded to affairs rather than the application of a method. The purpose of the sage Confucius in this case was not to reveal universal principles or a system, but to help later men to become morally attuned by putting themselves in the place of others.¹¹³ This is a way of thinking about culture generally: there was an original moment, but the layers of texts have created different levels of meaning in what has become a cumulative story, all of which can be appreciated.

For Ou-yang it was possible to appreciate the ancients but not to be exactly like them, precisely because the appreciation was occasioned by a sense of difference. While the ancients simply were as they were, unaware of anything

¹¹¹ On Ou-yang see, for example, Ronald C. Egan, *The literary works of Ou-Yang Hsiu* (1007-72) (Cambridge, 1984); Tsuchida Kenjiro, "Oyō Shu shiron"; Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu: An eleventh century Neo-Confucianist*.

¹¹² For a discussion of this text in the tradition of Songs exegesis, see van Zoeren, *Poetry and personality*.

¹¹³ Bol, "This culture of ours", pp. 198-201.

but their personal likes and dislikes, modern man carries the burden of self-consciousness. In his introduction to the "Treatise on rituals and music" in the *New history of T'ang* (*Hsin T'ang-shu*), Ou-yang put the problem like this: the "unity" of antiquity stemmed from the fact that all aspects of political, social, cultural, and economic life were all aspects of a ritual system. There was no difference between how people lived and how they ought to live, so it was not possible for people to have a sense that they were being moved toward the good or that there were any moral rules other than convention. Later history "comes from duality," as Ou-yang Hsiu puts it, meaning that the work of government and the effort to tell people how to behave became two distinct enterprises. Once again it is not possible to re-create the ancient situation, precisely because modern times start from a distinction between the political and the moral that the ancients did not possess. The question, which Ou-yang answers through the various treatises of the *New history*, is how to live in a world of duality. One cannot return to the forms of ancient institutions, but one can see how they have evolved over time and ask how the forms and purposes of institutions have changed. One can see that it is important to try to bring politics and morality together, but this will not be achieved by a systematic change or by keeping things from changing. Instead, literati must figure out what can be changed under the circumstances, and in doing this they must look beyond the immediate institutional interests of government to the general interest of all.¹¹⁴

After Ou-yang Hsiu himself the best-known defenders of his sensibility were the three Sūs, Su Hsün (1009–66) and his sons Su Shih and Su Ch'ē. Su Hsün also denied that the ancient could be restored. Time was historical, the future was open, but the choices that could be made were contingent on the circumstances that earlier actions had created. Each age in antiquity had its overarching value, Su opined, but one could not go back to the beginning and start all over again. His age needed to find something new to hold it all together. At the same time Su Hsün wrote at length on how a minimal application of power could be used to redirect the inertia of events (*shih*). This he called *ch'üan*, not so much in its sense of being at variance with the norm (it is often translated as the expedient as opposed to the constant), but in the original sense of a steelyard, where the weight of an object could be balanced by a small adjustment of a counterweight before it built up such inertia that the weighed object would plummet and the situation fall out of control. The values Su was interested in were those which bore on how the individual could stay in control of events, which in turn implied an understanding of how events unfolded and at what points one could redirect

¹¹⁴ Bol, "This culture of ours", pp. 194–8.

their course. It was possible, thus, for Su to envision a sage who would have a comprehensive perspective on the present and could guide it into a new era.¹¹⁵

The fifty essays Su Shih submitted, with Ou-yang's recommendation, for the prestigious degree examination of 1061 read as a synthesis of all the trends we have noted to this point, yet ultimately Su returns to Ou-yang's position. The essays combine a program for activism, institutional reform in government, and the transformation of society with a criticism of dogmatic interpretations of the Way of the Sages. He subscribes to the organic metaphor: the polity is like a body and keeping it healthy requires maintaining circulation and allowing the new to replace the old, but without requiring uniformity. He agrees on the importance of distinguishing roles and limiting government interference (government should create situations in which people will find it easy to do what is ultimately in their interest) but allows for social change and downplays hierarchical authority. He asserts that his views are based on an understanding of the natural patterns (*li*) of the myriad things but he also insists that they are true to human actualities and emotions (*jen-ch'ing*). His model is Confucius, who on the one hand "threads it all on a single strand" (*i-kuan*) and understands how all the patterns are tied together in a single whole, and on the other hand always acts appropriately to the moment. But throughout this account is an acceptance of the two-sidedness of the dualisms, of the world. The "practice of the equilibrium" (*chung-yung*), Su argues, is to recognize that in reality there are always two sides to everything and that one should strive to maintain a productive balance. Rather than trying to find one unchanging set of political and moral values – which necessarily will be one-sided and if followed absolutely will ultimately be self-destructive – the only truly universal way is to act according to one's judgment of the situation and, when circumstances call for it, to add support for the weaker side in order to create a balance. The middle or center, the point of equilibrium, is created by leaning first to one side and then to the other; it cannot be permanently fixed. As an example Su uses the polarity between acting according to institutional procedures and reliance on individual initiative and judgment, or "law and man" (*jen* and *fa*), to argue that unless greater space is given to individual initiative the institutions of the day will become impediments to the purposes they were created to realize, but to allow people to do as they please is equally dangerous. Thus, in the case

¹¹⁵ George C. Hatch Jr., "Su Hsün's pragmatic statecraft," in *Ordering the world: Approaches to state and society in Sung dynasty China*, ed. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 59–75. See also his "The thought of Su Hsün (1009–1066): An essay on the social meaning of intellectual pluralism in Northern Sung" (diss., University of Washington, 1978).

of the general population, for example, the solution is to establish institutions such as the clan system, that will enable them to rely on each other for mutual benefit. Human actualities are such that, given the means, they will spontaneously tend to support each other because they will see that it is in their own interest. In the end the Way of the Sages, even though ultimately it is beyond definition, must be something that will lead to things that work for everyone and thus the Way of the sages must always be true to human actualities and interests.¹¹⁶ Although Su Shih's mature ideas go far beyond this, we see already the attitudes with which Su would oppose Wang An-shih and the New Policies a decade later: an aversion to efforts to force uniformity on literati learning and to force society and the economy to conform to state-imposed institutions. Yet for all Su Shih's unhappiness with dogma, in these essays he wants to argue that he can see the whole, can analyze the dynamic of events, and has a method for responding so as to re-establish a state of equilibrium.

Cosmology and ethics

Although many Ancient Style intellectuals attacked the idea that there was a necessary connection between Heaven-and-Earth and the human work of governing and creating culture, there were still scholars who believed that the natural order was the foundation for society. During the course of the eleventh century, however, they largely abandoned two traditional models for making the connection between "Heaven and humanity." The first, which had been part of the T'ang founding, was that the sage kings had based civilization on the patterns of Heaven-and-Earth and that the Classics gave an account of what they had accomplished. In principle, because there was only one cosmos, there could be only one political order that corresponded to it, and since there was a record of that original order any dynasty that wanted to achieve greatness needed to work within the framework set out by the Classics. In effect this justified the Classics and the authority of unified empires as the sociocultural equivalent of the natural order. The second model, not incompatible with the first, was "cosmic resonance theory." This held that the *ch'i* (the matter and energy or material force that constituted all things) in the realm of human activity and the *ch'i* of the cosmos resonated. Human actions, particularly those at court, that contravened the harmonious and constant order of the cosmos could throw the cosmos off course, with dire consequences for agricultural life and the polity as a result. Human behavior was the egocentric variable and Heaven-and-Earth was the constant

¹¹⁶ For interpretations of these essays, see Bol, "*This culture of ours*", pp. 259–69; and Ronald C. Egan, *Word, image, and deed in the life of Su Shi* (Cambridge, MA, 1994), pp. 3–26.

foundation. Here too the Classics were supposed to guide humans in their roles.

Ancient Style writers could deny these connections, but all of them either tried to show that common notions about Heaven-and-Earth fit their ideas (Wang and Ssu-ma) or challenged the need to make a connection to the cosmos (Ou-yang Hsiu). The fact that practically every major intellectual figure wrote on the *Book of changes*, the one classic that claimed to connect man and cosmos, suggests how important it was to figure out what to do with the cosmos and how uneasy literati were with the idea that politics and morality might not have an absolute foundation.

Those literati who were most successful in persuading others that the cosmos provided a real foundation for politics and morality were those scholars who turned to the sages as sources of ideas for transforming individuals and then society. Their ultimate achievement was to make a connection between the processes through which Heaven-and-Earth brought the myriad things into being and the individual in such a way that they could explain what it meant to be a sage and seriously hold out the prospect that people in the present could be sages themselves. They moved what had once been the cosmic foundation of the political system and its culture into the self, where it became the grounds for personal morality and autonomy. This radical departure from traditional cosmology shared with the Ancient Style intellectuals – whom they accused of being more concerned with culture than with morality – a belief that their age could free itself from the legacies of the imperial past and mark a new beginning.

Chou Tun-i

An example of this is Chou Tun-i (1017–73), a local official who had entered office through the protection privilege and who, as a provincial teacher, briefly taught the Ch'eng brothers. His *Explanation of the diagram of the Supreme Ultimate* (*T'ai-chi t'u shuo*) would later become a key Neo-Confucian text, with the "Supreme Ultimate" being understood as the unity of all principles (*li*); read in a mid-eleventh-century context it makes better sense as an assertion that humankind, morality, and the sages were the outcomes of the process of creation itself. In Chou's eyes the sages neither modeled institutions on Heaven-and-Earth, as in traditional cosmology, nor created things to satisfy human needs and wants, as Ancient Style writers assumed. Rather the sages were men who were in perfect correspondence with the natural order and who by maintaining a state of tranquility that kept them in correspondence established themselves as the ultimate standard for humanity. To be moral was to cultivate what the sages had cultivated, taking benevolence and

righteousness, the equivalent of *yin* and *yang*, as the two main guides.¹¹⁷ Chou's *Comprehending the change* is continuous with this point of view but expands the topic from the sage as the ultimate standard (sections 1–10) to address government (11–19), learning (20–30), and other matters (31–40).¹¹⁸ It ends with what I take to be an imputation that Chou Tun-i as teacher is functioning as a latter-day Confucius (sections 38–40). Together these two texts offer an alternative to the meaning that Ancient Style reformers attached to the Classics, antiquity, and the Way of the Sages.

What makes Chou's sage in *Comprehending the change* different from the political models, and gives him the ability to serve as a guide to learning, morality, and politics, is the idea that the sage is a person who has fully realized something that he has innately. What he has innately is something all people possess, namely something that is of the creative, life-continuing process of Heaven-and-Earth. Chou calls this *ch'eng* (variously translated as sincerity, authenticity, or integrity); it is the innate foundation of the virtues and it is constantly present when one is in a tranquil nonacting state. As such it functions as an innate guide in that it defines a moral purpose for the individual (i.e. to continue life). Chou seems to have wanted to argue that the sage was born with perfect faculties and knowledge. His sage recognizes the contingency of historical events but has an intuitive ability to understand the course of development of events, and he spontaneously deploys the virtues appropriate to the circumstances to ensure good outcomes (i.e. outcomes that ensure that life continues). If normal humans are not sages they should still seek to emulate the sage.

From his vision of the sage Chou envisions an ideal ruler, who molds his subjects into a harmonious society, just as Heaven creates a harmonious natural order. To transform the people, rulers should improve themselves, employ the talented, and institute rituals and music. Chou is particularly concerned with the music, which he thinks the sages used to calm the populace and satisfy their desires, but which in modern times stimulates desire. What does all this mean for literati learning? One should learn to be a sage by maintaining a state of emptiness, disinterestedness, and freedom from desire, without worrying about social and political success. Literary composition is only of value if it is being used to convey the Way of the Sages. In effect Chou has defined learning

¹¹⁷ Chou Tun-i, *Chou Lien-hsi hsien-sheng ch'üan-chi* (*Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng* ed.) 1, p. 2. Translated and discussed by Joseph Adler in *Sources of Chinese tradition*, ed. William Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom (New York, 1999), Volume 1, pp. 669–76. Also consulting Ch'iu Han-sheng, Hou Wai-lu and Chang K'ai-chih, eds., *Sung Ming li-hsüeh shih* (Peking, 1984 and 1987), pp. 49–63.

¹¹⁸ Chou, *Chou Lien-hsi hsien-sheng ch'üan-chi*, translated in Wing-tsit Chan (Ch'en Jung-chieh), *A source book in Chinese philosophy* (Princeton, 1963), pp. 465–80. Also see Hou et al., *Sung Ming li-hsüeh shih*, pp. 68–80.

as learning to achieve a certain state of mind. Attaining a state of tranquility is more valuable than wealth and honor.

Although Chou seems not to have been influential in his own times, he did make an important claim that would become part of Neo-Confucianism: the foundation for morality is in the universe and in the self, it is that which makes possible the continuing of life itself, and the point of learning is to cultivate the ability to continue the process.

Shao Yung

Shao Yung shared the basic idea that Heaven-and-Earth generated humans as part of creation and by doing so gave them the ability to fulfill their roles as part of creation. Like Chou Tun-i (and Chang Tsai below) Shao thought he could figure out how this was possible, but instead of positing an inherent foundation in the individual, Shao found the solution in a system for analyzing the natural order and human politics, society, and culture. Understanding the system would enable literati to determine how to transform society under any circumstances, since all possible circumstances could be fitted into Shao's system.

Shao settled in Loyang in 1048. He eventually came in contact with the Ch'eng brothers, Ssu-ma Kuang, and other resident conservative scholars and officials. Shao's *Supreme principles governing the world* (*Huang chi ching shih shu*) no longer exists in its original form. Chu Hsi adopted some of Shao's charts as schemata of the "learning of what is prior to Heaven" (*hsien t'ien*); that is, the cosmological process upon which creation is based. Recent studies that have traced Shao's life and thought have drawn on his oral teachings and poetry as well.¹¹⁹ The comments that follow are based on the twelve-part *Inner chapters on observing things* (*Kuan wu nei-p'ien*), a relatively succinct and methodologically consistent work found in the *Supreme principles*, which is accepted as being from Shao Yung's own hand.¹²⁰ Yin Tun (1071–1142), a disciple of the Ch'engs, once commented that although his contemporaries saw Shao as contributing to the study of the *Changes*, what he basically offered was "learning for ordering

¹¹⁹ Don J. Wyatt, *The recluse of Loyang: Shao Yung and the moral evolution of early Sung thought* (Honolulu, 1996); and Ann Birdwhistell, *Transition to Neo-Confucianism: Shao Yung on knowledge and symbols of reality* (Stanford, 1989). On Shao and the *Changes* see Kidder Smith Jr. and Don J. Wyatt, "Shao Yung and number," in *Sung dynasty uses of the I Ching*, ed. Kidder Smith Jr., Peter K. Bol, Joseph A. Adler, and Don J. Wyatt (Princeton, 1990), pp. 100–35.

¹²⁰ Shao Yung's son, Shao Po-wen (1057–1134) said the original text had twelve chapters devoted to establishing numerical correspondences between cycles of time and human events, between the numbers of *yin* and *yang* and music and the myriad things. The last two chapters, possibly the "inner chapters" discussed here, Shao Po-wen described as being about how the book was done. See Hou et al., *Sung Ming li-hsieh shih*, pp. 184–5.

the world,”¹²¹ an observation that fits Shao’s title and the content of the “Inner chapters.”

Shao’s “method” was to categorize all phenomena using four-member sets, based on the cycles of major or rising (*tai*) and minor or falling (*shao*) phases of *yin* and *yang* in Heaven

Heaven			
<i>Yang</i>		<i>Yin</i>	
t'ai-yang	shao-yang	t'ai-yin	shao-yin

And the corresponding *kang* and *jou* on Earth

Earth			
<i>Kang</i>		<i>Jou</i>	
t'ai- kang	shao- kang	t'ai- jou	shao-jou

Shao explains that Heaven and Earth give rise to the “myriad things” through a process of generation, interaction, and multiplication. The four aspects of *yin–yang* and *kang–jou* produce the structuring elements of Heaven (Sun, Moon, Planets, Stars) and of Earth (Water, Fire, Soil, Stone). The two sets in turn produce climate and weather (e.g. Sun changes into warmth . . . Water transforms into rain . . .), which through their interaction realize all the possible permutations of Heaven-and-Earth. The two climate and weather sets affect corresponding elements of the myriad things as follows:

Warmth	Cold	Day	Night
affects	affects	affects	affects
nature	emotions	form	structure

Rain	Wind	Dew	Thunder
affects	affects	affects	affects
Walkers	Flyers	Plants	Trees

Depending upon what Shao wants to demonstrate he can also “multiply” two sets with each other to create a grid of sixteen possibilities (or even one set

¹²¹ Cited in Hou et al., *Sung Ming li-hsüeh shih*, p. 204.

against itself). In some instances he multiplies the rows against columns and columns against roles to create thirty-two possibilities (e.g. nature $\times$ walkers = nature of walkers/walkers of nature). He also employs cumulative multiplication, as in the case of the numbers of the four cycles of time, which he gives both as names (the complete cycle is named *yüan-yüan* and its division into generations is *shih-shih*) and numbers (1 and 18,662,400).

	Yüan 1	Hui 1 $\times$ 12	Yün 1 $\times$ 12 $\times$ 30 = 360	Shih 1 $\times$ 12 $\times$ 30 $\times$ 12 = 4,320
Yüan 1	yüan-yüan 1 $\times$ 1	12 $\times$ 1	360 $\times$ 1	4,320 $\times$ 1
Hui 12	1 $\times$ 12	12 $\times$ 12 = 144	360 $\times$ 12 = 4,320	4,320 $\times$ 12 = 51,840
Yün 30	1 $\times$ 360	12 $\times$ 360 = 4,320	360 $\times$ 360 = 129,600	4,320 $\times$ 360 = 1,555,200
Shih 12	1 $\times$ 4,320	12 $\times$ 4,320 = 51,840	360 $\times$ 4,320 = 1,555,200	4,320 $\times$ 4,320 = 18,662,400 shih-shih

Other sets of four include the Classics, seasons, organs of perception, types of talent, virtues, concepts, ways of ruling, kinds of ruler, ways of transforming others, and occupational categories. For Shao the coherence of his system trumped accommodating received understandings of the cosmos, such as the Five Phases, and of culture, such as the Five Classics.

Rather than reproducing Shao's sets and manipulations for each of the twelve sections of *Inner chapters on observing things* it must suffice to note his general theme and various arguments.¹²² Throughout, Shao focuses on the whole that can include all the parts and aims to show how this standpoint enables one to see where one is in the scheme of things and improve one's position. He begins by arguing that what makes the human different from all the rest of the myriad things is that the human alone has the ability to be stimulated by everything and to be responsive to all other things. All other things have been apportioned limited allotments and abilities, but the human is without limits for he can employ all the four senses (section 1). The sage is to the common person as the human is to other things: the sage is the most perfect of humans and is able to perceive everything that all humanity perceives. This ability to perceive the whole makes the sage the equivalent of Heaven. But he can only perceive *this* reality; if there is another one (as Taoists and Buddhists said) the sage would not be able to know about it (section 2). The sage's work is to realize the potential of humanity. Just as Heaven deploys the four seasons to bring things to completion, so does the sage use the four Classics/constants (the

¹²² Shao Yung, *Huang ji jing Shih shu* (*Ssu-pu pei-yao* ed.) (Taipei, 1969) 5, p. 1a; 6, p. 27b. The summary corresponds to the twelve numbered sections of the text.

Changes, Documents, Poetry, and Spring and autumn annals) to realize humanity’s potential (section 3).

However, as antiquity shows, there are distinction in the modes for realizing society’s potential. The following table brings together a series of correlations.

Three monarchs	Five emperors	Three kings	Five hegemons
share the same:			
idea	words	image	number
benevolence	ritual	righteousness	knowledge
nature	emotions	form	structure
sageliness	worthiness	talent	technique
but differently:			
transform	teach	exhort	command
through:			
Way	virtue	achievement	force

Knowing that these correlations exist, however, the sage can change the situation just as Heaven changes the seasons. The one requirement is that he be guided by a single standard: does it “give life to the populace.” (section 4). Confucius was the greatest sage because he understood that styles of rule must change with the times (just as the four Classics are subject to continuity and change). So although the four modes of rule lasted for longer or shorter periods, the Way of Confucius employs all possibilities and thus lasts forever (section 5). Confucius was able to see this because he lived under hegemons in the last stage but had access to the Classics, which enabled him to see the whole (section 6).

Because there is no one correct way to rule, the best thing the ruler today can do is choose as his ministers those who have “fathomed [this system] fully in their minds” (section 7). He will be able to do this if he is devoted to opening the way to life for all (section 8). In three generations he can move society from the current state of the hegemon to the state of the emperor, one stage per generation (section 9). What the ruler must understand is that there are cycles within cycles and variations within variations. There are in fact sixteen different states of rulership. (In this as in most of Shao’s grids the upper left-hand corner is the best and lower right-hand corner the worst).

	Monarch	Emperor	King	Hegemon
Monarch	monarch–monarch	emperor–monarch	king– monarch	hegemon–monarch
Emperor	monarch–emperor	emperor–emperor	king–emperor	hegemon–emperor
King	monarch–king	emperor–king	king–king	hegemon–king
Hegemon	monarch–hegemon	emperor–hegemon	king–hegemon	hegemon–hegemon

Which maps onto sixteen means of ruling:

	Way	Virtue	Achievement	Force
Way	With the Way practice affairs of the Way	With the Way practice affairs of virtue	With the Way practice affairs of achievement	With the Way practice affairs of force
Virtue	With virtue practice affairs of the Way	With virtue practice affairs of virtue	With virtue practice affairs of achievement	With virtue practice affairs of force
Achievement	With achievement practice affairs of the Way	With achievement practice affairs of virtue	With achievement practice affairs of achievement	With achievement practice affairs of force
Force	With force practice affairs of the Way	With force practice affairs of virtue	With force practice affairs of achievement	With force practice affairs of force

The hegemon–hegemon who uses force to practice the affairs of force can become something better. It only requires understanding and sustained effort. But one must begin from where one finds oneself (section 10).

Man is that in which “Heaven-and-Earth and the myriad things are complete” and Heaven and Earth are fully integrated (section 11). What humans can do to realize this potential is to become the “*shih* among *shih*”, i.e. the best of the four statuses, *shih*, farmers, craftsmen, and merchants), the highest kind of the highest class of human, by gaining the broadest and most inclusive view. To do this they must learn to “observe things,” not with the eyes, not even with the mind, but with patterns (*li*), and gain true knowledge. In order to do this they must practice “reverse observation:” to observe things in terms of each other, not from the perspective of oneself (and one’s own interests). So I know, Shao concludes, that I am a man like others and that we are all “things,” and thus I can use the eyes, ears, mouth, and mind of all under Heaven to see, hear, speak, and plan. Then what I know will be complete, this is what it means to be “perfectly intuiting (*shen*), perfectly sage.”

The *Inner chapters on observing things* illustrate what Shao means by “using things to observe things.” He can include everything, and although it pigeon-holes everything, it proposes that there are systematic, predictable relationships between categories which can be generated through simple operations, both on paper and in life. For Shao the material world is complete and sufficient, and contains within itself the guides to its own perfection. The task for the literati is to learn how to see the world like this, if they do they can know exactly where they are at any point, and thus they will know how to change the course of history.

Chang Tsai

The final example of a mid-century cosmologist is Chang Tsai (1020–77). Chang passed the *chin-shih* examination under Ou-yang Hsiu in 1057 and served in local government until being summoned to court in 1069, where he soon fell out with Wang An-shih and retired. His *Correcting youthful ignorance* (*Cheng meng*), completed near the end of his life, was the summa of his intellectual endeavor. Chang too was indebted to the *Changes* but in contrast to Chou and Shao he used his understanding of how humans were connected to the “way of Heaven-and-Earth” to explain why an individual could learn to become a sage. Chang also had a sociopolitical vision, that individuals could put into practice, drawn from the *Rites of the Chou*, which he saw as a radically decentralized polity. He was trying to put it into practice when he died.

Here I summarize Ira Kasoff's study of Chang's philosophy.¹²³ Chang used the idea that there is nothing but *ch'i* in the universe, which was either condensing into things or dissipating back into the “great void,” to tackle a number of issues. Contra the Taoists he argued that because everything was *ch'i*, there was no such thing as nonbeing (*un*) or any “source” of things that was beyond understanding, and contra the Buddhists he held that because *ch'i* remained when things disappeared the world was not illusory. *Ch'i* made all things a reality and it defined an ultimate moral goal: to continue the life process in a harmonious manner.¹²⁴ Chang applied the same analysis to the human being, figuring that as a living being he must replicate in some way the larger creative process. The real void of undifferentiated *ch'i*, the source of life, was human nature, something all possessed, and it existed in a body of condensed *ch'i* which in diverse ways distorted the “heavenly nature.”

Learning, Chang concluded, could be nothing other than cleaning up the *ch'i* so that one could become aware of the heavenly nature and thus be in tune with the process of creation. Chang's interest in the natural world did not go beyond these basic principles. Nor was he particularly interested in the textual tradition. It was good to memorize and recite the Classics, but other texts were not important. Ritual was the best way to improve one's *ch'i* constitution and sagehood was, as it was for Chou Tun-i, a state of being. When the mind, with undifferentiated *ch'i* as its substance, was in a state of disinterestedness it could sense what was in accord with the principles of an integrated and harmonious life process. This was its moral knowledge (*te-hsing chih chih*), something qualitatively different from cumulative factual knowledge.¹²⁵

¹²³ Ira Kasoff, *The thought of Chang Tsai* (Cambridge, 1984).

¹²⁴ Kasoff, *The thought of Chang Tsai*, chapter 2. ¹²⁵ Kasoff, *The thought of Chang Tsai*, chapter 3.

The sage was one who, having reached the stage where the mind had become sensitized, expanded its awareness so that he could see the creative process operating in human life. The sage would be like a mirror at the center of all activity, reflecting accurately the unfolding of the many strands of the life process. Empty and free of bias he takes in everything and sees the incipient springs of developments. Acting spontaneously, without thinking and without knowledge, he is stimulated by events and responds appropriately. He is engaged with the world and seeks to continue the process of creation without interfering in it. Capable of seeing patterns of development and change he can guide the populace, as did the sages of antiquity when they identified the seasons and the agricultural cycle. He regulates human affairs with ritual and his personal model stimulates the minds of others.¹²⁶

Chang Tsai also had a social program, one which depended on literati accepting his vision of learning and sagehood. Although Chang detached learning to be a sage from serving in government – literati can become sages irrespective of their official status – it is clear that he saw the point of learning as being able to take one's share of personal responsibility for society. Chang's famous "Western inscription" (the last chapter of *Correcting youthful ignorance*) begins with a Heaven-and-Earth-based egalitarianism. Given that we are the children of Heaven-and-Earth, with a substance that is the content of Heaven-and-Earth and a nature that is the controller of Heaven-and-Earth, the emperor becomes his brother and he, the sage, has familial responsibility toward all those in need.¹²⁷ Many of Chang's practical comments on ordering are couched in discussions of *Chou li* models. In particular he was a proponent of the so-called "well-field" system antiquity, in which the polity was highly decentralized and, at the local level, groups of nine farming families with equal shares of land formed communities around a revenue-producing common field. Chang argued that this system could be implemented in the present without confiscating land, by, among other things, enfeoffing high officials. The well-field system would also provide soldiers, making a professional army unnecessary, and thus making it unnecessary to collect large amounts of revenue.¹²⁸ A true restoration of feudalism might not be a real option in the present but, Chang insisted, it was the only way. "The sage apportions the realm under Heaven to people, and thus all matters are put in order."¹²⁹ Those with hereditary fiefs would provide local services and help those in need.¹³⁰ Wang An-shih also used the *Chou li* to justify centralizing and interventionist policies in local society, but Chang's reading of that text was quite different. For example,

¹²⁶ Kasoff, *The thought of Chang Tsai*, chapter 4.

¹²⁷ Chang Tsai, *Chang Tsai chi* (Peking, 1974), p. 62; trans. Chan, *A source book in Chinese philosophy*, p. 497.

¹²⁸ Chang, *Chang Tsai chi*, p. 249–50.

¹²⁹ Chang, *Chang Tsai chi*, p. 251. ¹³⁰ Chang, *Chang Tsai chi*, p. 250.

Chang's support for a market stabilization program in which officials would buy and sell goods with official funds seems to agree with one of the New Policies. In fact Chang saw this as one aspect of a decentralized feudal system. The market officials would manage commercial centers independently of the central government: "The market policy is only the affair of the one market official, it is not an affair of royal policy."¹³¹ Chang attached importance to lineage formation – "[The sentence] 'The Son of Heaven establishes the state; feudal lords establish their lineages' is also heavenly principle" – and taught students about how to do it.¹³² Once the well-field system was in place, ritual (in a broad sense, including education and reward and punishment) would be all that was needed to order the populace. Ritual could be changed with the times, but only by those who understood "that ritual is based on what is so-by-itself of Heaven," and thus had to be developed by sagely literati.¹³³

Chang's feudal view of government, family, and ritual fits his understanding of what it means to learn. The decentralization of political power and its concentration in the hands of local leaders requires that the elite learn to "complete their natures" and gain the qualities that enabled the sage kings of the past to govern, except that now they would each need to act as sages within their own domains. Chang opposed the New Policies on the grounds that governance should be locally formulated rather than centrally mandated. He died before he was able to acquire land to create a well-field community and show that he had a better alternative. His followers joined the Ch'eng brothers.

FINDING AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE NEW LEARNING

For almost fifty years before the Sung lost the north China plain to the Jurchen's Jin empire (1115–1234) the court was led by advocates of the New Policies (1069–85, 1093–1100, 1102–24). Because Wang An-shih and his followers had a program for teaching the literati their way of learning, intellectual culture during this period quickly came to be defined in relation to what was called the "Wang Learning" or the "New Learning." Many of the figures discussed to this point died in the 1070s during the New Policies. The opposition to the New Policies came from Ssu-ma Kuang, who died soon after the opposition regained power in 1085, and two younger men, the literary intellectual Su Shih and the moral philosopher Ch'eng I, both of whom were at the center of circles of admiring literati students and officials. Both articulated alternatives to the New Learning.

¹³¹ Chang, *Chang Tsai chi*, p. 249. ¹³² Chang, *Chang Tsai chi*, p. 259.

¹³³ Chang, *Chang Tsai chi*, p. 264. Also see Chow Kai-wing, "Ritual, cosmology, and ontology: Chang Tsai's moral philosophy and Neo-Confucian ethics," *Philosophy East and West* 43 No. 2 (April 1993), pp. 201–28.

Before turning to Su and Ch'eng it will be useful to note the degree to which the New Learning was institutionalized. New Learning was meant to prepare students to serve the goals of the New Policies, as described in the first Palace Examination question asked under Wang An-shih:

When the sages exercised kingship over the empire (*t'ien-hsia*) all officials fulfilled the duties of their offices and all affairs were correctly organized. If there was something left undone then they did it, and whatever they did succeeded. If there was someone left unreformed then they reformed him, and whomever they reformed accepted it. The fields were opened to farming; the irrigation channels were in good repair. Plants and trees flourished. Fowl and beast, fish and reptile, all realized their natures. They had the wealth to make the rites complete, the knowledge to perfect music, and the administration to see that punishments accurately fit [the crime]. Gentlemen, what must be done to attain this?¹³⁴

The New Policies regimes also had a fairly consistent intellectual policy: to teach literati a new way of thinking that would help them keep perfecting the polity by requiring them to pass through a school system with a common curriculum. Shared values, even at the risk of instilling uniformity, were a good thing, and in the early twelfth century other points of view were actively suppressed.

Under Wang An-shih the court moved quickly to transform the examination system. It abolished the "various fields" of memorization of canonical texts and exegetical knowledge. In the *chin-shih* examination it replaced the regulated verse poem and rhyme-prose with ten discussions of the meaning of passages from one single classic of choice (*Poetry, Documents, Changes, Rites of the Chou, Book of rites*) and ten on the *Analects* and *Mencius*; the essay and treatises on questions of policy or scholarship were kept. The government began work on new commentaries: the *New meanings of the Rites of the Chou, Poetry, and Documents* were produced by Wang An-shih, his son Wang P'ang (1044–76), and the Office for Commentaries on the Classics; Wang An-shih himself wrote commentaries on the *Changes, Book of rites, and Analects* and produced the *Explanation of characters*. Wang P'ang wrote the commentary on the *Mencius*. A field in the legal codes was added in 1102 and a field in the Taoist classics – the *Inner classic of the Yellow Emperor* and Emperor Hui-tsung's commentaries on the *Lao-tzu, Chuang-tzu, and Lieh-tzu* – between 1118 and 1124.¹³⁵

At the same time the court ordered unprecedented investments in education: state schools and salaried teachers for every prefecture and county. Under Hui-tsung (r. 1100–26) primary schools were attached to existing schools. Schools were to provide room and board, using income derived from

¹³⁴ Hsü Sung et al., eds., *Sung hui-yao chi-kao* (Taipei, 1976) (hereafter *SHY* (1976)) *hsüan-chü* 7, p. 19a–b.

¹³⁵ Yüan Cheng, *Sung-tai chiao-yü: Chung-kuo ku-tai chiao-yü te li-shih hsing chuan-che* (Kuang-chou, 1991), pp. 30–1, 43.

rents on local government land. For example, in 1109 there were 167,662 registered school students supported by rents from about 1.5 million acres. Special schools for math, law, painting, calligraphy, and medicine were established at the capital and eventually medical schools were mandated for all prefectures.¹³⁶ At the same time county and prefectural schools (*chou-hsüeh*) adopted the Three Hall System (*San-she-fa*) of the Imperial University. Students were expected to actually attend these schools, they had regular examinations, and they were promoted from one grade to the next on the basis of examinations.

The goal was eventually to replace the examination system with a school system. From 1107 to 1120 literati were no longer allowed to take the prefectural qualifying examination outside the school system. Students graduated from the county to the prefecture to the Imperial University and then, once every three years, university students took the palace examination, or if their grades were exceptional they could be appointed directly from the university to office (about thirty students were directly appointed every year). The quota for passes was increased by just over a third (from 550 to 750 every three years) but only those who had passed through the school system were eligible to take the examinations.¹³⁷ For the first time the educational system and the selection system were united.

New Policies education aimed at “unifying morality and making customs the same” (*i tao-te t’ung feng-su*). Ideological unity was both a precondition for the integrated and prosperous social order it sought to create and a consequence of creating it.¹³⁸ Opponents argued – the circle around the great literary intellectual Su Shih in particular – that it was not possible to make everyone the same, no matter how laudable the ends uniformity was meant to serve.¹³⁹ But for the court it was. Even the edict creating the Painting Academy asserted that it would “Unify morality and show respect for following models in order to make all practices under Heaven

¹³⁶ Edward A. Kracke Jr., “The expansion of educational opportunity in the reign of Hui-tsong of the Sung and its implications,” *Sung Studies Newsletter* 13 (1977), pp. 6–30, citing of the Director of Education in 1109.

¹³⁷ Yüan Cheng, *Sung-tai chiao-yü*, pp. 120–51. Kondo Kazunari, “Zai Kyō no kakyō, gakko seisaku,” *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 53 No. 1 (1994), pp. 24–49, argues that the triennial examinations during these years were exceptions to the rule in each case, and the court had wanted to appoint all officials directly from the Imperial University.

¹³⁸ *SHY hsüan-chü* 3, p. 44b, for 1071/2/1. The phrase comes from the “Institutions of the King” chapter in the *Book of rites*.

¹³⁹ Peter K. Bol, “Examinations and orthodoxies: 1070 and 1313 compared,” in *Culture and the state in Chinese history: Conventions, accommodations, and critiques* (Stanford, 1997), and “The examination system and Sung literati culture,” in *La société civile face à l’état dans les traditions chinoise, japonaise, coréenne et vietnamienne*, ed. Leon Vandermeersch (Paris, 1994), pp. 55–75.

the same."¹⁴⁰ From the start the curriculum had excluded the *Spring and autumn annals* (*Ch'un-ch'iu*), the one classic that connected moral judgment to historical events. In 1102 the court ordered that the moral philosophy of the Ch'eng brothers not be taught and that literary models not be taken from Su Shih and his group. Generally it was forbidden to teach historical and literary works as well as the teachings and writings of the anti-New Policies officials who dominated the court between 1085 and 1093. At moments the antipathy was especially pronounced – as when students at the Imperial University burned Ou-yang Hsiu's writings. Criticism of the court was considered a top infraction of school rules and might result in exile.

The demonization of the New Policies and the resurrection of Su Shih and Ch'eng I that began in the Southern Sung period eventually was so effective that almost nothing remains that can tell us what the New Policies educators were trying to accomplish aside from suppressing opposition views. It was, after all, a fairly successful educational apparatus which, much of the time, encouraged learning and knowledge. There were, for example, at least twenty-two figures, almost all of whom came from the south, who produced sizable literary collections and numerous other works.¹⁴¹ Few except Shen Kua (1031–95), some of whose work did survive, have received sustained attention. Hui-tsung's interest in Taoism seems not to have been representative of the intellectual tone.¹⁴² The court's economic and social policies required the investigation of the actual situation, careful planning, and concerted effort. A better illustration of the ethos might be Hui-tsung's creation of the refined and technically sophisticated palace production of auspicious paintings.¹⁴³ They were better paintings of that sort than anyone else had ever done and they celebrated the notion that Heaven looked with favor on Sung, the emperor, and his policies. The same thing could be said for the palaces, universities, and temples that the Directorate for Construction was undertaking. Its greatest director, Li Chieh (d. 1108), was author of the *Manual on architecture* (*Ying-tsao fa-shih*), the famous guide to the design and construction of all building based on the principle of modular design. Like Hui-tsung he was erudite in antiquities; a skillful calligrapher and painter; a great bibliophile; and an expert on epigraphy, musical instruments, and horses. Li Chieh's buildings and Hui-tsung's

¹⁴⁰ See SS 157, p. 3688 and *SHY ch'ung-ju* 3, p. 1a. Note that the Painting Academy's students were divided between the literati and painters of other social backgrounds.

¹⁴¹ Shen Sung-ch'in, *Pei Sung wen-jen yü t'ang-cheng: Chung-kuo shih-ta-fu ch'un-t'i yen-chiu chih i* (Peking, 1998), pp. 182–202.

¹⁴² For an account of the Hui-tsung's Taoist projects, see Patricia Buckley Ebrey, "Taoism and art at the court of Song Huizong," in *Taoism and the arts of China*, ed. Stephen Little and Shawn Eichman (Berkeley, 2000), pp. 101–11.

¹⁴³ Maggie Bickford, "Emperor Huizong and the aesthetic of agency," *Archives of Asian Art* 53 (2002–3), pp. 71–104.

palace art have much in common: high technical standards, a lack of interest in individual variation, a concern with effective functioning, and a coherence of design in which all the parts fit together seamlessly and can be applied by anyone anywhere with the same result. The bibliographic record shows that the New Policies regimes were, more than any other period in the Sung, committed to the creation of clearly defined systems that could be codified rather than ad hoc arrangements and personal initiative.¹⁴⁴ Su Shih's critique of the new educational policy, that it aimed to produce literati "like striking prints off a block, all you need to do is color them in," seems to be on the mark.¹⁴⁵

The advent of the New Policies pressed those who, like Su Shih and Ch'eng Hao, had once supported reform to clarify the grounds for their opposition. This was also an intellectual challenge, for the New Policies were justified by learning and once in power Wang An-shih began to claim that the policies were also in harmony with Heaven-and-Earth and innate human qualities.¹⁴⁶ But it was not just a matter of finding an alternative to Wang's learning. The opposition was itself divided into factions associated with Su, Ssu-ma Kuang, and Ch'eng I.¹⁴⁷ Su and the Ch'eng brothers offered a way in which literati as individuals could learn for themselves and, by doing so, establish their own self-worth independently of service in government. In this sense they also serve as a critique of the court's continued emphasis on the Way of the Sages as an approach to transforming society through the reform of government. In the case of Su Shih, the literary successor to Ou-yang Hsiu, this meant the end of the Ancient Style view that the literary enterprise should be concerned with defining values for political culture.¹⁴⁸ In the case of Ch'eng I, who proclaimed himself and his brother to be the only true Confucians, this meant an end to the focus on making the state system moral, a concern that had dominated Confucian thought and practice since the Han dynasty.

The Su learning

Su Shih's readership over the centuries has seen him as a literary figure.¹⁴⁹ He was, but he also explained why literature and art mattered. He did so, his

¹⁴⁴ Peter K. Bol, "Whither the emperor? Emperor Huizong, the new policies, and the Tang-Song transition," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 31 (2001), pp. 103-34.

¹⁴⁵ Bol, "This culture of ours", p. 273.

¹⁴⁶ Ch'en Kuan (1057 or 1060-1124) wrote (after he had turned against the New Policies) that in all ways Wang had based the New Policies and the new curriculum on claims to *hsing-ming chih li*; see *Sung Chung-su Ch'en Liao-chai Ssu-ming tsun Yao chi* (Hsü-hsiu SKCS ed.), preface.

¹⁴⁷ Accounts of these factions can be found in Lo Chia-hsiang, *Pei Sung tang-cheng yen-chiu* (Taipei, 1993); and Shen, *Pei Sung wen-jen yü tang-cheng*.

¹⁴⁸ Ho, *Pei Sung te ku-wen yü-tung*, pp. 282-7.

¹⁴⁹ Two recent works in English are Michael Anthony Fuller, *The road to East Slope: The development of Su Shi's poetic voice* (Stanford, 1990); and Egan, *Word, image, and deed in the life of Su Shih*.

brother asserted after his death, in the context of an understanding of “the learning of high antiquity which had been disrupted” and which he had “clarified through inference” from the Classics.¹⁵⁰ Su Shih’s commentaries on the *Changes* (a work begun by his father) and the *Documents* were one of his vehicles for making his arguments about the learning (his commentary on the *Analects* is lost).

Su set out to demonstrate that when understood correctly antiquity did not provide support for the New Policies, but he also set out to provide a new understanding of the Way of the Sages as something all people would be capable of practicing in daily life.

In his *Documents* commentary Su makes clear that the first sages, the “Former Kings” (*Hsien wang*), were very good but by no means perfect rulers who faced problems common to all of history. As rulers they were successful because they consulted with others, accepted criticism, responded to public opinion, and recognized that effective policy required building public support. “Confucius must have thought that the one sentence that could lose the state was this: ‘The populace should all be like me.’”¹⁵¹ They accepted the legitimacy of private interests and private wealth and did not try to destroy elites and their families (contradicting Wang An-shih’s contention that land-amassing local elites were the obstacle). Even as they were driven to rely ever more on law and institutions they strove to ensure that there was a place for individual judgment according to the situation. They preferred ritual to law, and its appeal to honor rather than fear.

The way the sages governed came to define “benevolent governance”; their conduct came to be codified as virtues. Individuals can, through a process of mental internalization, make these virtues their own second nature, so to speak, and act accordingly. But Su proposed something more – rather than simply imitating the virtues of the sages one could learn to become a sage oneself: “If one enacts a virtue without knowing the *li* by which it is so then his virtue is like borrowed goods, it is not something he himself possesses. If he himself cannot possess it how will he be able to extend it to others?”¹⁵² To be able to function like a sage means going beyond imitation and internalization.¹⁵³

Su saw sages as successfully coping with an unstable world by responding to events as they unfolded. They did not adhere to fixed standards yet what they did was appropriate under those circumstances. They were able to respond flexibly and creatively for two reasons, Su determined. First, they sought to

¹⁵⁰ Su, *Su Tung-p’o chi*, forematter, pp. 49–50.

¹⁵¹ Su Shih, *Shu chuan* (SKCS ed.) 20, p. 7b; James Legge, *The Shoo king* (Taipei, 1971), p. 627.

¹⁵² Su, *Shu chuan* 12, p. 12a–b. ¹⁵³ Bol, “*This culture of ours*”, pp. 284–9.

understand what they confronted, which in Su's terms meant apprehending the patterns (*li*) of the matter at hand – i.e. understanding how it was organized, how it came to be, and how it would develop if left alone. Second, they understood that the source guiding their responses to events was in themselves, not in things. They were not controlled by events, nor did they need a dogma, because they had “a ruler within” (*chung yu chu*).¹⁵⁴ At first glance this sounds something like Ch'eng I's idea that there are *li* in things and in the self; by fathoming the principles of things outside, one becomes aware that one already has it inside oneself as one's moral nature. However, in his commentaries and in his occasional writings Su insisted that the “ruler within” was not something that could be sought and defined; at best one could catch onto it and apprehend it for oneself (*tzu te*). Taking up a passage that contrasts the “human mind” with the “*tao* mind” – a passage Chu Hsi would later use to make an absolute distinction between selfish desire and an innate moral awareness – Su argues that “human mind” refers to the emotions common to all people and “*tao* mind” to an “original mind” in the self whence emotions arise. However,

As for the original mind. Where is it in fact? Does it exist [phenomenally]? Or does it not exist? If it exists [as a phenomenon] then that which brings into being pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy is not the original mind [i.e. a particular thing cannot be the one source for many emotions]. If it does not exist then what is it that brings into being pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy? Therefore, the original mind is not something scholars can seek through effort, yet those who have caught on can apprehend it for themselves.¹⁵⁵

The challenge was to unify the two, to make sure that one's responses to the world were not only tied to an understanding of the phenomena one confronted but also grounded in something internal that could not be defined.¹⁵⁶

In his commentary on the *Changes* Su gives a more elaborate account of how it is possible to rely on internal guidance to act responsibly in a world of diversity and change. Like many others he posits that there is an ultimate and unitary source where all things come into being – we are in some sense all one. This exists in Heaven-and-Earth (where by convention it is called *tao*) and in the person (by convention called *hsing*, “human nature”). However, for Su it is essential that this ultimate source not be defined as something – to define it would create fixed standards and make one unable to cope with changing circumstances. One cannot define the source in terms of its products. The good is a product of human nature, but one cannot define human nature as good. It is possible to define the process by which things arise from this source – and this is how Su can define a way of learning for all – but the source itself remains beyond definition. All inherent patterns (*li*) are one *li*, Su agrees, but

¹⁵⁴ Su, *Shu chuan* 7, pp. 20b–21a. ¹⁵⁵ Su, *Shu chuan* 3, pp. 7b–8b.

¹⁵⁶ Bol, “*This culture of ours*”, pp. 289–92.

you cannot hold onto the “one” as something fixed and defined. One can “catch on” in practice but it cannot be known intellectually.

Su’s definition of learning depends on his perspective on the human condition. The human world is one of ever-multiplying dualities (for Su the *yin-yang* process is pervasive), ever more distant from the ultimate source whence all things came into being. Su’s image is of always being carried off “downstream” into a world that is becoming ever more complex and diverse with the creation of new things; a single spring which, over time, gives rise to a complex river system with humanity being carried ever further away along the many streams, losing sight of the source. Yet, for Su, if this splintering world is to avoid destroying itself, there must be people who respond to events by creating or doing things that people can share, that will incline them to work together and co-operate, and that will tap into their commonality. “Those in antiquity who were good at governing never competed with the people. Instead they allowed them to choose for themselves and then guided them to it.”¹⁵⁷ The one who responds to events does not end diversity, he just makes sure that everything is in a safe channel.

How is this to be accomplished? The solution is to work one’s way “upstream,” as Su puts it. The one who responds to events can do this, Su argues with reference to things as diverse as swimming, music, and the desires, by understanding intellectually the *li* of the category of the thing or affair at hand. He can study the *li* of water (how one sinks and floats) and learn to swim; he can reflect on his feelings and see that there is something beyond desire whence desire arises. But in the end there is a leap into an intuitive unity with the source and oneness with the thing at hand. At this point he achieves spontaneity and, being one with water or with his own character, he can respond to it (or from it) without calculation. What he produces will provide the guides that he and others need. Thus he acts in a manner true to himself and to the thing he is responding to and brings things into being that have real value for that moment. Su’s spontaneity is premised on knowledge, thought, and learning. His aim is to accomplish things of value. As he does so he is exemplifying Confucius’ claim that “Man can broaden *tao*; it is not that *tao* can broaden man.”¹⁵⁸

In literature and art Su demonstrated what he meant. The unique style of a calligrapher is formed through the study of past styles, and yet it draws on some creative source within himself so that it is new and different. At the same

¹⁵⁷ Su Shih, *Su-shih i chuan* (TSCC) 6, p. 138.

¹⁵⁸ Confucius, *Analects* 15, p. 29. Su, *Su-shih i chuan* 7, p. 160. For a detailed account of Su’s views, see Peter K. Bol, “Su Shih and culture,” in *Sung dynasty uses of the I Ching*, ed. Kidder Smith Jr., Peter K. Bol, Joseph A. Adler, and Don J. Wyatt (Princeton, 1990), pp. 56–99.

time its uniqueness resonates with what has gone before and others can appreciate it and learn from it, even as they develop their own styles. For Su, style mattered but literature and art were also vehicles for expressing what one had learned about something and for demonstrating how one responded to it. As one of the greatest poets and essayists of his day Su was doing this constantly, offering the particular instance and his individual responses as the mediating lens through which his readers could see the world. His larger argument was that this kind of deep engagement in literature and art not only produced things of value but also was a way of developing the ability to respond to the world from a combination of acquired knowledge and internal creativity. It was, he insisted, a valid means of gaining and judging the worth of an individual.¹⁵⁹ Government did not need an agenda, in Su's view, it needed people who would help others pursue their own interests in socially productive ways.

The Ch'eng learning

Ch'eng I and his brother Ch'eng Hao developed a method of learning that, despite official suppression, came to be seen as the great alternative to the New Learning of Wang An-shih. After failing the palace examination Ch'eng I devoted his life in Loyang to learning and teaching. His earliest known writing argued that the kind of learning taught by Confucius was premised on that which was innate to humans as creatures of Heaven-and-Earth; only by cultivating this endowment (and not by pursuing the learning of texts and literary composition) could one become a sage. At that point, in 1059, Ch'eng conceived of this endowment as five natures corresponding to the Five Elements which were realized as the five virtues. By 1086, when he was brought to court as a tutor to Emperor Che-tsung (r. 1085–1100), he had jettisoned the five phases in favor of a method of learning premised on the theory that the innate endowment that could provide moral guidance was *li*.¹⁶⁰

Practically all the intellectuals of the late eleventh century used the term *li* in the sense of the common patterns or norms for categories of thing or the principles according to which things worked as part of a whole. Chang Tsai, for example, used *li* to refer to how the pattern of the *yin-yang* process condensed and dissipated *ch'i*. For Ch'eng I, however, *li* was not a proposition about how things worked but something that was real and substantial in the

¹⁵⁹ Also see Michael Anthony Fuller, "Pursuing the complete bamboo in the breast: Reflections on a classical Chinese image for immediacy," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 53 No. 1 (June 1993), pp. 5–24.

¹⁶⁰ Discussed in Peter K. Bol, "Ch'eng Yi as a literatus," in *The Power of culture*, ed. Willard Peterson, Kao Yu-kung, and Andrew Plaks (Hong Kong, 1994). This section is based on Bol, "This culture of ours", pp. 300–27, and A. C. Graham, *Two Chinese philosophers: The metaphysics of the brothers Cheng* (La Salle: Open Court, 1992 [1958]).

thing itself. It was only visible to the mind, and thus was inherently different from factual knowledge and perceptions. But it was visible to the mind because it was also the principle of the mind's workings; it was the nature of the mind. Ch'eng rejected Chang's view that *ch'i* was recycled throughout the universe (he believed that the universe and the individual were constantly generating new *ch'i*), and argued instead that it was *li* that was universal and constant. *Li* named that which people in the past had been referring to when they used the terms *hsing* (human nature) and *tao*. Thanks to *li* there was a real and necessary way everything should be, and the individual could cultivate the ability to know it with total certainty.

In Ch'eng I's usage the concept *li* does at least three things. First, it is that in things which gives them a coherent, integrated structure: the structure of a tree integrates leaf, branch, trunk, and root, and the structure of filial piety ties together parent and child in ways that create distinct social roles. Second, it is that which guides the process of development of a thing: the tree goes through daily, annual, and life cycles; the relationships and roles between parent and child change and develop over time. Third, *li* determines the function of a thing as part of a larger whole: the tree has different functions depending on the system it is part of (forest, economy, wood for building) and wood from different trees can best be used for different purposes; the child-parent relationship has a function in larger entities of lineage, community, and state. For Ch'eng these larger contexts are natural developments, and thus do not undermine his claim that the *li* of something is in the thing rather than in our ideas about things. All things have *li*. Ch'eng, again like others at the time, asserts the unity of *li* in the sense that all roads lead to the capital or all things ultimately came into being from a single source and are part of an organic whole. What he and Ch'eng Hao asserted that was different was the *oneness* of *li*. All *li* were one and the same *li*. We might say that the quality of having structure, process, and function did not vary. We can comprehend this dual sense of unity and oneness when *li* is translated as "coherence." Any given thing has its own coherence and the coherence of one thing is just as coherent as the coherence of another; coherence itself does not vary even when each thing has its own coherence.¹⁶¹

It follows from this that *li* defines the value of any given thing. If a thing accords with its *li* then it is by definition functioning as it ought to function, harmoniously as part of a larger whole. To keep the process of life ongoing it is necessary that the *li* of things be realized. It thus defines that which should guide human activity, from the individual's daily acts on up to government policy. Ch'eng had an explanation for why, although the necessary guides were

¹⁶¹ Willard J. Peterson, "Another look at *li*," *Bulletin of Sung-Yüan Studies* 18 (1986), pp. 13-32.

already in things and men, people had lost their way, had been left at the mercy of selfish desire, and had turned to religion for help. When people lost awareness of *li* they let the mind be controlled by the push and pull of *ch'i*.

Ch'i itself was not bad. Ch'eng believed that in antiquity right behavior was inculcated into people by influencing their *ch'i*. People were originally brought into being out of the pure *ch'i* of Heaven-and-Earth, but as they procreated over time the quality of *ch'i* deteriorated and it became impossible to lead a moral life simply by trying to maintain the ancient forms. The sages created civilization in a cumulative fashion over time, not in response to human desires and needs but as the means of giving form to the *li* for human life with ceremonies, music, clothing, and so on (Ch'eng insists that because cultural creations were generated from insight into *li* they cannot be called "man-made"). But these did not have the same effects on people in the present because the quality of *ch'i* had declined since antiquity and ancient cultural implements no longer worked on them. In some cases he merely stated that the ancient means of inculcating right behavior in people had been lost. In either case the result was the same, literati in the present would have to rely on mental effort and see *li* for themselves:

For the ancients learning was easy. In their eighth year they entered the minor school and in their fifteenth the greater school. There were decorations (*wen-ts'ai*) to nurture their sight, sounds to nurture their hearing, majestic ceremonies to nurture their four limbs, song and dance to nurture their circulation... Today these are all lost, there is only *i-li* (moral principles) to nurture the mind. Must we not make an effort?¹⁶²

Cultivating the person now meant nurturing the mind.

Ch'eng held that humans can become aware of *li*, once they know it is there, because it is in things and in them. Moreover, humans are endowed with *t'ien-li*, "heavenly principle," meaning all the principles of cosmos as an organic whole. The mind can become aware of *li* but the mind is subject to distraction and adulteration. Thus students must train themselves to illuminate *li*. Although some have purer *ch'i* than others and can learn to do so more quickly, in theory everyone can learn to illuminate *li* and see exactly the same thing. If they do so, they will refine their *ch'i*, become ever more aware of *t'ien-li*, and instinctively accord with *li* when they respond to events in the external world.

In explaining how to do this Ch'eng drew on a passage from the "Great Learning" chapter of the *Book of rites* which he took to mean that "attaining knowledge depends on investigating things." To "investigate things" is to fathom the *li* of the thing, and to realize that one has fathomed the *li* in the

¹⁶² *I shu* 21A, p. 268, emended following formulations in *I shu* 15, pp. 162-3; 17, p. 177; 18, p. 200; and 22A, p. 277.

object of one's attention, whether it is a text from the sages or a practice such as filial piety, is to realize one's own nature (*chin hsing*), for human nature is nothing other than the totality of *li*. There is an internal aspect to this. Ch'eng I speaks of "inner mental attentiveness" (*ching*) which is to keep the mind impartial and undistracted by "taking unity/oneness as its ruler." The external aspect involves thinking about things. Should one try to know many things and see as many *li* as possible or will it suffice to see one thing well enough to apprehend what *li* is? Ch'eng says both. This is not so much a contradiction as it is a recognition of both the unity of *li* and the oneness of *li*. In either case one must maintain a state of integrity (*ch'eng*); that is, maintain the coherence of *li* in one's awareness.

The call to "investigate things and fathom their *li*" as a continuous and expansive process sets Ch'eng I apart from Ch'eng Hao. For Ch'eng Hao investigating things was repair work for someone who had lost awareness of *t'ien-li*. The person who preserves attentiveness (although with Ch'eng Hao *ching* might better be translated as "composure" rather than "attentiveness") and integrity, who maintains a state of what Ch'eng Hao called "humaneness" (*jen*), is in a state of unity with Heaven-and-Earth and the myriad things. In theory this awareness guarantees that the individual's spontaneous responses to things will correct and encourage them, bringing them into the condition of harmony and equilibrium that is the proper state of self, society, and cosmos.¹⁶³ Ch'eng Hao's sage is in this sense closer to the spontaneously responsive nonintellectual figure that Chang Tsai had in mind.

Ch'eng I's concern with an expanding understanding of the principles in external phenomena and texts, and his tendency to differentiate the virtues (albeit in terms of *li*) – rather than as a unified sensibility inherent in the self – led him to go beyond a concern with being able to respond spontaneously to things. For example, he spoke of creating rituals that would work in the present, something only one who, like himself, "knew the Way" could succeed at. He taught the *Book of changes* (the commentary was compiled by his students) and the *Spring and autumn annals*. Sagehood became the goal of learning as a lifelong activity, not a state that one stepped into and preserved, and learning tied together intellectual understanding and moral knowledge.

Ch'eng I provided a justification for many of the things that eleventh-century literati wanted to believe. He reunited "Heaven and man." He provided a way to understand the Mencius claim that human nature was good. He offered an understanding of human internality, and the relationship between internality and the cosmos, that led to engagement with society rather than retreated from it, such as he presumed to be the case with Buddhists and

¹⁶³ Graham, *Two Chinese philosophers*, pp. 96–107, 127–30.

Taoists. To a greater degree than other cosmologists he tied moral knowledge to an expanding and open-ended intellectual engagement with the world. He gave substance to the belief that there was a single unitary way. In contrast to Su Shih, for whom the apprehension of truth would always be mediated by personal character and experience, Ch'eng I envisioned direct and certain knowledge.

Ch'eng differentiated what he was doing from what he saw as the main activities of literati intellectual culture. "Those who learn today have divided into three. Those of literary ability are called *wen-shih* and those who discuss the Classics are stuck being teachers. Only those who know *tao* are [engaged in] *ju* learning."¹⁶⁴ Not only did he privilege his learning, which he called *Tao-hsiieh*, he claimed that he alone defined what it meant to be a *ju*. This was a new kind of *ju*, one whose priorities were not defined by politics. The grave declaration he wrote for his brother Ch'eng Hao asserts,

When the Duke of Chou died, the Way of the Sages was no longer practiced. When Mencius died the Learning of the Sages was no longer transmitted. When the Way was no longer practiced there was no good government for a hundred generations. When the Learning was no longer transmitted there were no true *ju* for a thousand years. When there was no good government, literati were still able to illuminate the Way of good government by learning indirectly from others and transmitting it to later times.¹⁶⁵ But when there were no true *ju* everyone was lost and did not know where to go. Human desire went free and heavenly principle was destroyed. The gentleman was born 1,400 years later. He apprehended the learning that has not been transmitted in the surviving classics; his will was to use This Way of Ours to enlighten this people of ours.¹⁶⁶

If history shows that having the right political foundation could not preserve morality, then the restoration of morality depended on learning as something independent of politics. Ch'eng no longer was concerned with how to make politics serve moral ends; he was asking how individuals could become moral. There is little to suggest that he, or Ch'eng Hao after his short flirtation with the New Policies, saw political reform as a priority. Nevertheless in Southern Sung it would become clear that their ideas had great significance for those who were concerned with how literati could be socially responsible.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ *I shu* 6, p. 95; there are two other versions of this; see *I shu* 18, p. 187.

¹⁶⁵ *Mencius* 4B, p. 22, "I have not had the good fortune to have been a disciple of Confucius. I have learned it indirectly from him through others." D. C. Lau, trans., *Mencius* (Harmondsworth, 1970), p. 132.

¹⁶⁶ Ch'eng Hao and Ch'eng I, *Erb Ch'eng chi* (Peking, 1981) 11, p. 640.

¹⁶⁷ Ch'eng I had little to say about politics and institutions, with the exception of calling for the restoration of the clan system (*tsung-tzu fa*) on the grounds that it was necessary to having hereditary ministers and would teach people to respect their ancestors and origins, something that would ultimately be good for the authority of the court. The Ch'eng brothers' political proposals are reviewed in Hou et al., *Sung Ming li-hsiieh shih*, pp. 127-32.

TRENDS IN SOUTHERN SONG INTELLECTUAL CULTURE

After the ideological excesses of Hui-tsung's reign and the loss of the north China plain, dynastic restoration and then survival were the pressing issues of the day. The court retreated from the New Policies program of organizing and transforming society and of demanding ideological unity of the literati. Although the court sometimes tried to accommodate the ideological opponents of the New Policies without disowning Wang An-shih, its basic stance was to deny the relevance of ideology to government. The examinations recognized this by, most of the time, offering two tracks, the pre-New Policies literary examination and a New Policies-style "meaning of the Classics" examination. The proscription of "false learning" (*wei-hsiieh*) in 1195–1202 was an attack on those who tried to organize officials into ideological camps in opposition to the court, not a defense of any well-defined ideology of its own.

However, among the literati – not just officials – ideological movements flourished, spreading out in networks from their local bases as proponents of different intellectual positions found receptive audiences among the increasing numbers of schools and students, exceedingly few of whom had any hope of passing the examinations. The rise of private academies (*shu-yüan*) which were associated with particular networks of teachers provided an institutional context for the spread of movements and the formation of literati opinion to a far greater degree than had been the case in Northern Sung.¹⁶⁸ What is striking about the movements about which we know the most – Chu Hsi and *Tao-hsiieh*, the statecraft thinkers, and Lu Chiu-yüan's (1139–93) group, is their loss of faith in government service as the only means to take responsibility for society. The formation in southern China of a literati intellectual culture at the local level that was not fully embedded in the bureaucracy continued through the Mongol conquest. Much of the credit for this belongs to the *Tao-hsiieh* movement and its entrepreneurial spokesman Chu Hsi, based in northern Fu-chien, and to the statecraft scholars of eastern Chekiang, such as Yeh Shih, who promoted the idea of a smaller state that facilitated private economic development. Wang An-shih and Su Shih continued to draw attention, but neither found spokesmen who further developed their ideas and organized support.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Linda A. Walton, *Academies and society in Southern Song China* (Honolulu, 1999).

¹⁶⁹ For a different conclusion about the possibility of a rival center of authority, see Chang Hao, "The intellectual heritage of the Confucian ideal of *Ching-shih*," in *Confucian traditions in East Asian modernity: Moral education and economic culture in Japan and the four mini-dragons*, ed. Tu Weiming (Cambridge, MA, 1996), pp. 72–91.

The Tao-hsüeh movement in Southern Sung

The Southern Sung *Tao-hsüeh* advocates (discussed in another chapter) saw the Ch'eng learning as an alternative not only to Buddhism and Taoism but also to the New Policies and the "Wang Learning" that justified them. Against imperial claims to superiority and centrality, *Tao-hsüeh* eventually offered its own "continuity of the Way" (*Tao-t'ung*), a line of moral authority that went from the sage kings, to Confucius and Mencius, to Sung dynasty *Tao-hsüeh* scholars.¹⁷⁰ But Neo-Confucianism in Southern Sung was also southern, whereas in the Northern Sung it had been largely northwestern. It envisioned ways of maintaining national unity quite different from the court-centric model promoted under the New Policies. On the cultural front, for example, Southern Sung *Tao-hsüeh* promoted an education system supported by private wealth. Private academies and family schools were parallel to the state system but somewhat independent of it, and they offered a curriculum that was defined by local traditions and scholarly networks as well as by the requirements of the examination system. They also offered Neo-Confucians an institution for disseminating their teachings.¹⁷¹ They addressed themselves not only to officials and their families but also to local elites who were transforming themselves into literati. On the social front they defended the role of local literati elites in society, while stressing their moral duty to maintain ethical standards and act responsibly in local society and in office. Neo-Confucians presented themselves as defenders of extended family structures and lineage solidarity, and they devoted considerable attention to the creation of family and lineage rituals. They encouraged the creation of local institutions which would be led by literati families: the charitable granary was an alternative to the Green Sprouts Policy (*ch'ing-miao fa*) of the New Policies and the "Community Covenant" offered a model of lateral elite community relations grounded in morality as an alternative to the *pao-chia* village organization.

The rise of *Tao-hsüeh*, with its own publications, rituals, and shrines, demonstrated that literati could share ideas about morality that were not promulgated or modeled by the court.¹⁷² Its advocates doubted the value

¹⁷⁰ The most influential formulation of the *Tao-t'ung* concept comes from Chu Hsi's son-in-law Huang Kan (1152–1221). Some scholars have recognized that *Tao-hsüeh* was a challenge to imperial autocracy rather than a defender of it. See, for example, Wood, *Limits to autocracy*; and writings of William Theodore de Bary, *Neo-Confucian orthodoxy and the learning of the mind-and-heart* (New York, 1981); *The message of the mind in Neo-Confucianism* (New York, 1989); *Learning for oneself: Essays on the individual in Neo-Confucian thought* (New York, 1991).

¹⁷¹ Thomas H. C. Lee (Li Hung-ch'i), *Government education and examinations in Sung China* (Hong Kong and New York, 1985); Walton, *Academies and society in Southern Song China*.

¹⁷² Ellen G. Neskari, "The cult of worthies: A study of shrines honoring local Confucian worthies in the Sung Dynasty (960–1279)" (diss., Columbia University, 1993); and Chu Ping-tzu, "Tradition building

of examination-system learning, and at times even of examinations, but in the thirteenth century they began to dominate examination discourse.¹⁷³ The court's enshrinement of the Neo-Confucian masters in the Confucian temple in 1241 was a measure to gain literati support. Neo-Confucians saw officials not as activists who could transform society through institutional leadership and reward and punishment but, ideally, as cultivated individuals who influenced others by their personal illustration of ethical behavior. Social transformation in the *Tao-hsiieh* vision required the moral transformation of individuals, and that was a matter that Neo-Confucians intended to keep in the hands of true scholars; it did not belong to the court and ruler by virtue of power and position, even if they wanted the latter to recognize the correctness of their ideas and efforts. As Ichiki Yasuhiko has shown, *Tao-hsiieh* established the concepts, texts, institutions, and networks for a literati moral culture in local society.¹⁷⁴

The "Yung-chia" statecraft scholars

At the same time that *Tao-hsiieh* was gaining prominence, a series of statecraft scholars from Wen-chou in Chekiang, with its seat in Yung-chia county, were gaining a following. Yung-chia thinkers were heirs to multiple traditions. In the Northern Sung there were local scholars who were associated with Wang An-shih's learning, such as Wang K'ai-tsu, and with Chang Tsai and the Ch'eng brothers, such as Chou Hsing-chi (*chin-shih* 1091). In addition to teaching in Wen-chou, the Southern Sung Yung-chia scholars – most famously Hsiieh Chi-hsüan (1134–73), Ch'en Fu-liang (1137–1203), and Yeh Shih – had ties to networks of scholars in Fu-chien (Chu Hsi), Chin-hua (Lü Tsu-ch'ien and Ch'en Liang), and Ning-po (Lu Chiu-yüan, Yang Chien, and Yüan Hsieh).¹⁷⁵ By the late twelfth century the historically minded Yung-chia

and cultural competition in Southern Song China (1160–1220): The way, the learning, and the texts" (diss., Harvard University, 1998).

¹⁷³ Hilde De Weerd, "The composition of examination standards: Daoxue and Southern Song dynasty examination culture" (diss., Harvard University, 1998).

¹⁷⁴ A recent study of how this came about is Ichiki Tsuyuhiko, *Shu Ki monjin shūdan keisei no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 2002). Ichiki sees the rise of Neo-Confucian local culture as giving the state apparatus regulatory power from below in addition to its top-down authority; I would stress the tensions that this created between local literati communities and the state apparatus.

¹⁷⁵ The most thorough account of the development of the Yung-chia school is Chou Meng-chiang, *Yeh Shih yü Yung-chia hsiieh-p'ai* (Hang-chou, 1992), chapters 3–6; on Yeh Shih's connections to other schools, see chapters 7–10. Niu Pu, "Confucian statecraft in Song China: Ye Shi and the Yongjia school" (diss., Arizona State University, 1998), provides a useful discussion of similarities and differences between Yeh Shih and Chu Hsi, Ch'en Liang (1143–94), and Lu Chiu-yüan. A more detailed account of the ideas in this section will be found in Peter K. Bol, "Reconceptualizing the nation in Southern Song statecraft: Some implications of Ye Shi's statecraft learning," in *Ti-san-chieh kuo-chi Han-hsiieh hui-i lun-wen-chi: Li-shih tsu, Ssu-hsiang, cheng-chüan yü she-hui li-liang*, ed. Huang Ko-wu (Taipei, 2002), pp. 33–64.

scholars were taking issue with *Tao-hsiieh*, and their respective spokesmen, Yeh Shih and Chu Hsi, who had often been political allies, were criticizing each other on intellectual grounds.

Southern Sung statecraft scholars differed from *Tao-hsiieh* activists in their focus on learning from history and their interest in reforming political institutions, fiscal policy, and military affairs rather than moral cultivation.¹⁷⁶ Yet the kinds of reform they envisioned – and which through their activity as teachers and writers they spread among literati – supported the strengthening of local society and private wealth that *Tao-hsiieh* depended on to prosper. But just as importantly they provided an alternative both to the New Policies vision of an activist and expanding state and to Ssu-ma Kuang's model of a small state managing a static society. The hallmark of Yung-chia statecraft theory was the belief that improving the general well-being depended on private landed wealth, craft and industrial production, and commerce, and that the state, rather than trying to command society and the economy, should facilitate the private economic initiative.¹⁷⁷

As Yeh Shih described it, this would be a smaller state. Although he has been seen as a supporter of an aggressive and expensive foreign policy, Yeh might be better described as a pragmatist who called for a strong national defense precisely because foreign states were independent actors.¹⁷⁸ The central states (*chung-kuo*) existed relative to the states that surrounded them.¹⁷⁹ National defense did not require a large state, he held, and he argued for reducing the size of government, cutting taxes, and giving the provincial authorities and military commanders greater autonomy.¹⁸⁰ The decentralization of power, both on the borders and in domestic provincial administration, would allow a smaller state to be more effective. However, he stopped short of calling for a return to feudalism, as some Neo-Confucians had done.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁶ Compared to studies of *Tao-hsiieh*, little has been written about the flourishing Southern Sung tradition of statecraft writing and its similarities and differences with Northern Sung. In English note the articles collected in and the editors' introduction to *Ordering the world: Approaches to state and society in Sung Dynasty China*, ed. Conrad Schirokauer and Robert P. Hymes (Berkeley, 1993). Of particular importance are Hoyt Cleveland Tillman (T'ien Hao), *Utilitarian Confucianism: Ch'en Liang's challenge to Chu Hsi* (Cambridge, MA, 1982); and *Ch'en Liang on public interest and the law* (Honolulu, 1994); and Winston Wan Lo (Lo Wen), *The life and thought of Yeh Shih* (Gainesville, 1974).

¹⁷⁷ Chou, *Yeh Shih yü Yung-chia hsiieh-p'ai*, chapter 12; Chang, *Yeh Shih p'ing-chuan* (Nanking, 1994), pp. 214–18. Niu, "Confucian statecraft in Song China," pp. 164 ff., argues that Chen Liang stressed the importance of merchants and commerce whereas Yeh was inclined to favor the wealthy and landholders.

¹⁷⁸ Yeh Shih, *Yeh Shih chi* (Peking, 1961), pp. 637–43, 684. ¹⁷⁹ Yeh, *Yeh Shih chi*, p. 760.

¹⁸⁰ On Yeh's view of the proposed northern campaign, see Chou, *Yeh Shih yü Yung-chia hsiieh-p'ai*, pp. 202–4; Chang I-te, *Yeh Shih p'ing-chuan*, pp. 88–94; and his "Letter to the Commissioner of Military Affairs" (*shang hsi-fu shu*) in *Yeh Shih chi*, p. 540, discussed in Lo, *Yeh Shih*, p. 50.

¹⁸¹ Lo, *Yeh Shih*, pp. 124 ff. Note Hu Yin's attack on the centralized administrative system as being intended to benefit the ruler alone versus the feudal system that benefited all, quoted as the commentary for Liu Tsung-yüan's "On Feudalism," in Chen T'e-hsiu's (1178–1235) *Wen-chang cheng-tsung* (SKCS) 13, pp. 15a–19b.

Turning to the relationship between the ruler and the bureaucracy, Yeh argued that the emperor's authority came from exactly those virtues which made his position dependent on bureaucratic support: delegating authority to officials, accepting criticism, following advice, respecting honorable men, and forsaking desire in the face of pleasure.¹⁸² Yeh in fact played a leading role in forcing Emperor Kuang-tsung (r. 1189–94) to abdicate the throne in 1194, a move the Neo-Confucians supported.¹⁸³ He also reconsidered the relationship between the state apparatus and the populace with the aim of differentiating the *kuo*, as an administrative entity with its own traditions, from the populace. The populace was not part of a whole defined by the *kuo* and its productive power did not belong to the *kuo*.¹⁸⁴

In antiquity it had been the case that the ruler, through his officials, was responsible for both the material welfare of the populace and its moral education, but this was no longer the case in Yeh's view, if only because the services the government offered did not justify the revenue it sought to extract.¹⁸⁵ The government should draw resources from the populace on the basis of what the populace did for itself and not on the basis of state command, he contended, in return for which it had some responsibility for providing relief. It should not engage in the redistribution of wealth or land by confiscating land from large landowners. The rich were the vital source of local leadership and stability. What the state could do was facilitate a better distribution of the populace and the literati across regions by opening new areas to development.¹⁸⁶

Yeh rejected Wang An-shih's attack on the mediating role of local elites, Chang Tsai's egalitarian agrarian society led by local worthies, and Ssu-ma Kuang's notion of a world free of social change. The state's role in "managing wealth" (*li ts'ai*) meant undertaking those measures that would increase private wealth. It should maintain the money supply and through its monetary policy prevent the kind of inflation and deflation that would lead to declines in production. And it should demonstrate that it could be a fair and predictable actor in the economy, rather than a self-aggrandizing opportunist.¹⁸⁷ This meant reducing those revenue measures that allowed government to take advantage of the private economy. Revenues would be reduced but a smaller bureaucracy and army would need less. By using the privy purse to cover shortfalls the imperial establishment would be reduced as well.¹⁸⁸

Yeh saw his views as conclusions reached through learning and in "On literati learning" (*Shih-hsüeh*) he argued for studying practical matters such

¹⁸² Yeh, *Yeh Shih chi*, p. 636. ¹⁸³ Lo, *Yeh Shih*, pp. 84 ff.

¹⁸⁴ Yeh, *Yeh Shih chi*, pp. 644–51. ¹⁸⁵ Chou, *Yeh Shih yü Yung-chia hsüeh-p'ai*, p. 189.

¹⁸⁶ Yeh, "Affairs of the populace," *Yeh Shih chi*, pp. 651–7.

¹⁸⁷ Yeh, "Plans for wealth," *Yeh Shih chi*, pp. 657–65. For Yeh on economic policy also see Chou, *Yeh Shih yü Yung-chia hsüeh-p'ai*, chapter 12.

¹⁸⁸ Lo, *Yeh Shih*, pp. 124–35, 60–73. Chou, *Yeh Shih yü Yung-chia hsüeh-p'ai*, chapter 13.

as the monetary policy and the legal system.¹⁸⁹ He justified further expansion of educational opportunities, and thus decreasing chances of passing the examinations, on the ground that it would both increase the pool for recruitment and improve local understanding of the larger picture.¹⁹⁰ At the same time he thought local government should employ literati as clerks and allow clerks entrance into the regular civil service.¹⁹¹ Like other statecraft scholars, Yeh historicized the Classics. They were, he argued, a reflection of governance in antiquity rather than the basis for ancient government, and should not be reduced to truth points that could transcend context.¹⁹² One might appreciate the intentions of the ancients in reading the *Rites of the Chou*, without thinking that it justified a complete theory that could be imposed on the present with no thought to the differences in context.¹⁹³ Historians needed to write about modern and recent history as well.¹⁹⁴

In the eyes of Ancient Style writers and New Policies officials, the ultimate justification for government was its ability to increase the well-being of all the populace, by investing in local improvements, organizing society, and spreading education, and training the literati to serve its officials. But it was the cosmologists and Ch'eng I who provided the philosophical basis for the idea that literati could be socially responsible and gain moral authority irrespective of who was in power. The *Tao-hsüeh* movement in Southern Sung is evidence that the literati were discovering how much they could do themselves. The strength of this new order would be confirmed by its ability to survive the conquest of the south by the Mongols and their northern armies in the 1270s.

¹⁸⁹ Yeh, "Literati learning, part I," *Yeh Shib chi*, pp. 673–5.

¹⁹⁰ Chou, *Yeh Shib yü Yung-chia hsüeh-p'ai*, chapter 17. John W. Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning in Sung China: A social history of examinations* (Cambridge, 1985).

¹⁹¹ Yeh, "Clerks," *Yeh Shib chi*, pp. 808–9.

¹⁹² Yeh, "General principles," *Yeh Shib chi*, pp. 693–5. On Yeh's critical attitude toward the Classics and Neo-Confucian claims, see Chang, *Yeh Shib p'ing-chuan*, chapter 4.

¹⁹³ Yeh, "Rites of Chou," *Yeh Shib chi*, pp. 702–4.

¹⁹⁴ Chou, *Yeh Shib yü Yung-chia hsüeh-p'ai*, chapter 16.

THE RISE OF THE *TAO-HSÜEH* CONFUCIAN FELLOWSHIP IN SOUTHERN SUNG

Hoyt Cleveland Tillman

In the wake of the Jurchen conquest of the Northern Sung (960–1127) in 1127, Chinese literati lived in a politically divided and culturally dislocated world.¹ The loss of the cultural heartland of North China and the failure of many scholar-officials (*shih-ta-fu*) to remain loyal to the dynasty raised doubts about the state of literati customs and Confucian values.

¹ Besides the writings of the Sung philosophers themselves, this chapter draws most heavily from the *Tao ming lu* (*Record of the destiny of the Tao*), compiled by Li Hsin-ch'uan (1239; Taipei, 1966), which was the first history of the *Tao-hsüeh* movement. The *Sung Yüan hsüeh-an* (*Records of Sung and Yüan Confucians*), compiled during the early Ch'ing era by Huang Tsung-hsi, Ch'üan Tsu-wang et al. (Peking, 1986), was the first intellectual history of Sung Confucianism and will hereafter be cited as *SYHA*. The *Ssu-ch'iao wen-chien lu*, compiled by Yeh Shao-weng (c. 1225; Peking, 1989), also contains information about the Southern Sung government's policies and actions toward *Tao-hsüeh*. The most comprehensive and documented discussion of the politics of *Tao-hsüeh* during the Sung is Yü Ying-shih's *Chu Hsi te li-shih shih-chieh* (Taipei, 2003; Peking, 2004). Special attention should also be given to two other modern works: Ch'ien Mu, *Chu-tzu hsin hsüeh-an*, 5 vols. (Taipei, 1971); and Ch'iu Han-sheng, Hou Wai-lu, and Chang Ch'i-chih, eds., *Sung Ming li-hsüeh shih*, Volume 1 (Peking, 1984), which has a useful chapter on each of the major figures covered here. Recent notable surveys of *Tao-hsüeh* Confucian thought include Ch'ü Hsia, *Sung-hsüeh te fa-chan bo yen-pien* (Shih-chia-chuang, 2002); Fan Li-ch'ou, *Li-hsüeh te ch'an-sheng chi ch'i li-shih ming-yün* (Sian, 2001); Ho Chün, *Nan-Sung ju-hsüeh chien-kou* (Shanghai, 2004); and Kuan Chang-lung, *Liang Sung Tao-hsüeh ming-yün te li-shih k'ao-ch'a* (Shanghai, 2001). The publication of Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh)'s *Chu Hsi: New studies* (Honolulu, 1989) allowed me to transfer my citations to this English version of his *Chu-tzu hsin t'an-so* (Taipei, 1988). For more extensive citation of Chinese and Japanese secondary sources, see my *Chu Hsi te ssu-wei shih-chieh* (Taipei, 1996, and Sian, 2002). James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien)'s *China turning inward: Intellectual-political changes in the early twelfth century* (Cambridge, MA, 1988) has a useful political narrative and extensive bibliography. Updated bibliographies are published occasionally in the *Journal of Song-Yüan Studies*. For a fuller discussion of *Tao-hsüeh* Confucians and the issues between them, please refer to my book, *Confucian discourse and Chu Hsi's ascendancy* (Honolulu, 1992), or the revised and expanded Chinese version, *Chu Hsi te ssu-wei shi-chieh*. Support for this study was provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities and by Arizona State University (the Office of the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Humanities Program of the Graduate College, and the Vice-President for Research). Thanks are also due Margaret Mih Tillman and my graduate students, Huang P'ang, Chi Hsiao-pin, Yü Tsung-hsien, and Jenny Lee, for their advice and assistance in various details. I have especially benefited from advice and encouragement given by professors James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien) (1919–93) and Yü Ying-shih. Valuable suggestions also came from Wing-tsit Chan (Ch'en Jung-chieh) (1901–94), Ch'eng I-fan, and Conrad Schirokauer.

Responding to this political and cultural crisis, Confucian intellectuals defended their literary culture and *Tao* (Way) in the belief that regeneration of Confucian values would empower them to restore order and expel the alien conquerors. As Hu Hung (1106–61) observed about foreign invasions, “When the Central Plain (*Chung-yüan*) was without the *Tao* of the Central Plain, the barbarians entered; when it restored the *Tao* of the Central Plain, the barbarians returned to their territory.”² Hu Yüan (993–1057), the first major Sung Confucian thinker, had reportedly distinguished three levels of what was meant by the *Tao*: *t’i* (essence or substance of all things); *wen* (literary and cultural expression, including the Classics, histories, and belles-lettres); and *yung* (function in governance). These three levels provide modes for analyzing Confucian discourse: what in the West would be called speculative philosophy (Chinese reasoning about a nonempirical level of primary principles), cultural values, and comment on policies.³ Debates took place among scholars about whose interpretation of the *Tao* was correct and what reconstruction of the tradition should serve as the standard for building a Confucian society.

Among Sung Confucians, one wing was intensely focused on the *Tao* and gradually became labeled *Tao-hsüeh* (*Tao*-learning or Learning of the Way).⁴ Even though some Northern Sung men had used the term to refer rather inclusively to Sung Confucians’ revived attention to the Confucian *Tao*, and other early Sung men even used the term to point to the Taoism of their day, Ch’eng I (1033–1107) and his associates occasionally adopted the term to designate the extraordinary dedication to learning the *Tao* that they regarded as distinguishing their own particular group. In this more restricted sense, individual philosophers had begun the revival of *Tao* learning as early as the 1060s, but *Tao-hsüeh* as an association began to form only in 1085 with the triumph of the Yüan-yü conservatives, led by Ssu-ma Kuang (1019–86), over the reformers, inspired by Wang An-shih (1021–86). Despite the intellectual diversity within this alliance of political conservatives, all its major members – except

² Hu Hung, *Hu-tzu chib-yen* (Taipei, 1965) 6, p. 1a, trans. adapted from Conrad Schirokauer, “Chu Hsi’s political thought,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 5 No. 2 (June 1978), p. 127.

³ Hoyt Cleveland Tillman (T’ien Hao), *Utilitarian Confucianism: Ch’ien Liang’s challenge to Chu Hsi* (Cambridge, MA, 1982), pp. 153–4, 196–8; and the Chinese version: T’ien Hao (Hoyt Cleveland Tillman), trans., *Kung-li chu-i te ju-chia: Ch’ien Liang tui Chu Hsi te t’iao-ch’an* (Nanking, 1997). Using nonempirical for *hsing erb shang* (“above form”) discourse was borrowed from Donald J. Munro, *Images of human nature: A Sung portrait* (Princeton, 1988), p. 5. For the statement attributed to Hu Yüan, see SYHA 1, p. 25, translated in William Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, eds., *Sources of Chinese tradition from earliest times to 1600*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1999), Volume 1, p. 384.

⁴ Tillman, *Confucian discourse*, and also *Chu Hsi te ssu-wei shih-chieh*, especially the introductions; Yü, *Chu Hsi te li-shih shih-chieh*; but also Tillman’s review in *Dao* 3 No. 2 (Summer 2004), pp. 355–62; Ch’ien Chün-min, “‘Tao-hsüeh, cheng-shu’ chih chien – lun Sung-tai tao-hsüeh chih yüan-hsing chi ch’i chen ching-shen,” *Che-hsüeh yü wen-hua* 29 No. 5 (May 2002), pp. 409–25. For contrast with the rubric, “Neo-Confucianism,” see discussion below and citation in note 7.

Su Shih (1036–1101) and his followers – were included in this *Tao-hsüeh* tradition from the perspective of most twelfth-century Confucians. Su Shih never belonged because of his sharply different approach to the *Tao*.⁵

During the twelfth century, both insiders and outsiders increasingly used *Tao-hsüeh* as a designation for a particular tradition and fellowship, as distinct from other Sung Confucians (e.g. Su Shih and Wang An-shih), on the one hand, and from conventional Confucians, on the other hand. “Conventional Confucians” (*shih ju*)⁶ were the ones who most loyally continued the literary and classical studies from the Han and early T’ang periods; thus they were little affected by the eleventh-century Confucian renaissance that had such a major impact on various schools of Sung Confucians, including those of Wang An-shih, Su Shih, and Ch’eng I. Either the more conventional Confucian scholar-officials, on the one hand, or followers of the Wang and Su schools, on the other hand, generally dominated the government during the Southern Sung. Even though such non-*Tao-hsüeh* strains of Confucianism are historically important and deserve further study on their own merits, recent centuries of scholarship on Southern Sung Confucianism have concentrated on one narrow line within the *Tao-hsüeh* group.

This essay seeks to expand the scope of coverage of Southern Sung Confucianism, but concentrates in only two directions. First and primarily, I will seek to show that we need to look at a much larger “fellowship” or community of *Tao-hsüeh* thinkers in order to understand how ideas developed, how Chu Hsi (1130–1200) only slowly (and largely in retrospect) emerged as its representative figure, and how it eventually became both intellectual and state orthodoxy. In other words, in following the historical evolution of this socio-political group in the Sung, I identify a *Tao-hsüeh* fellowship that is more specific and less vague than some usages of the term “Neo-Confucianism” (which often includes all Confucians from the mid-T’ang to the present), but not

⁵ See particularly Peter K. Bol, *“This culture of ours”: Intellectual transitions in T’ang and Sung China* (Stanford, 1992).

⁶ Because these “Conventional Confucians” lost the political and cultural conflicts of the era, their works have largely been lost, and very few modern scholars research them. Still, important articles have been written by Erling Von Mende and Ishida Hajime. Erling Von Mende, “Wo ist der Geist zu Hause? Überlegungen über die Verfolgungen der Ch’ing-yüan-ära und ihre Spätfolgen am Beispiel von Mitgliedern der Kao-familie aus Ming-chou,” in *Lebenwelt und Weltanschauung im frühneuzeitlichen China*, ed. Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer (Stuttgart, 1990), pp. 55–82. Ishida Hajime, “Nan Sō Meishū no Kōshi ichizoku ni tsuite,” in *Sōdai no shakai to shūkyō*, ed. Sōdaishi kenkyūkai (Tōkyō, 1985), pp. 225–56; his “Shū Mitsu to Dōgaku,” *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 49 No. 2 (September 1990), pp. 25–47; and his “Tō Chū-yū oboegaki: Nansō shisōshi no hitokusari,” *Shakai-bunashigaku* 12 (July 1975), pp. 23–37. Yeh Shih (1150–1223) and others began within the *Tao-hsüeh* fellowship, but became alienated from it and then became major critics. See especially my *Confucian discourse and Chu Hsi’s ascendancy, passim*; Niu Pu, “Confucian statecraft in Song China: Ye Shi and the Yongjia school” (diss., Arizona State University, 1998); and Mou Tsung-san, “Tao-te p’an-tuan yü li-shih p’an-tuan,” *Tung-hai hsüeh-pao* 1 (June 1959), pp. 219–61.

as narrow as other usages of the term (which focus on the “Neo-Confucian orthodoxy” of a narrow lineage to and from Chu Hsi).⁷ Secondarily, I will attempt to treat the fellowship’s most outspoken and effective Southern Sung critics – the “conventional Confucians” – more seriously than most other modern accounts, which often depict them as being merely establishment bureaucrats and/or anti-intellectual. To more conventional scholar-officials, *Tao-hsiieh* Confucians were extremists who overreacted to the crises of the era. Moreover, the exclusive claim to Confucian legitimacy inherent in *Tao-hsiieh* amounted to nothing more than a pretense to gain greater cultural and bureaucratic standing than talent alone would justify. Relatively more focused on political activism, the conventional scholar-officials were not inclined to follow the *Tao-hsiieh* penchant for speculative philosophy and rigorous examination of the *hsin* (mind-and-heart). Little is known about the ideas or personalities of most of these conventional scholar-officials in the Southern Sung, because they ultimately lost the political struggle and the judgment of history. Rather than launching an exploratory mission to recover the philosophies of their political opponents in the Southern Sung, the present study will focus on the group that ultimately won, but I will attempt to avoid treating this triumph as inevitable.

By 1241, advocates of *Tao-hsiieh* had secured state recognition for their tradition’s claim to cultural orthodoxy; moreover, the succeeding Yüan (1260–1368) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties enhanced its status as state orthodoxy. Even though *Tao-hsiieh* enjoyed this privileged status, official recognition did not mean that *Tao-hsiieh* men (and all were men) would actually determine the making of government policy. Oriented primarily toward the maintenance of public order, the state continued to employ officials with divergent ideas and to draw upon other religious and folk beliefs. Still, state recognition meant that the relationship between *Tao-hsiieh* intellectuals and the state had been altered from what it had been in the twelfth century.

Most extant sources for studying Southern Sung Confucianism originated from within the *Tao-hsiieh* camp, hence it is difficult to avoid the imprint of their perspective. The *Sung shih* (*Sung dynastic history*), compiled in the

⁷ For a discussion of the diverse usages of “Neo-Confucianism,” see Hoyt Cleveland Tillman (T’ien Hao), “A new direction in Confucian scholarship: Approaches to examining the differences between Neo-Confucianism and Tao-hsiieh,” *Philosophy East and West* 42 No. 3 (July 1992), pp. 455–74; “The uses of Neo-Confucianism, revisited: A reply to Professor de Bary,” *Philosophy East and West* 44 No. 1 (January 1994), pp. 135–42; and “Reflections on classifying ‘Confucian’ lineages: Re-inventions of tradition in Song China,” in *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam*, ed. Benjamin Elman, John Duncan, and Herman Ooms (Los Angeles, 2002), pp. 33–64. See also Benjamin A. Elman, “Rethinking ‘Confucianism’ and ‘Neo-Confucianism’ in modern Chinese history,” in *ibid.*, pp. 518–55; and Lionel M. Jensen, “Among fallen idols and noble dreams: Notes from the field of Chinese intellectual history,” *Chūgoku shigaku* (*Studies in Chinese History*) (December 1997), pp. 33–67.

1340s, even created a special category of *Tao-hsüeh* biographies centered on Chu Hsi. This official history excluded not only his enemies, but also his intellectual rivals within the *Tao-hsüeh* fellowship itself. Rather than following the convention established in that history commissioned by Mongol rulers, the present study will draw upon the earlier (1239) history, the *Tao ming lu*. Written by Li Hsin-ch'uan (1167–1244), a noted historian with ties to the fellowship, this historical account reflected the broader view prevalent during the Southern Sung. Professor Charles Hartman's recent research has differentiated Li's own text from what was inserted later in the Yüan by a *Tao-hsüeh* partisan.⁸ Moreover, Li also drew attention to the role of political leaders in the group's fortunes. Similarly, the present chapter will incorporate political, philosophical, and social contexts in its history of the group's development.

Given the occurrence of the term *Tao-hsüeh* in Southern Sung sources, I will use this rubric throughout the period to highlight the continuity and evolution of the group as a fellowship. There were some fundamental philosophical differences between thinkers; however, beyond affinities arising from the ideas and ideals that they did share, their political, personal, cultural, and other ties provided substantial bonding for their association or fellowship. By "fellowship," I mean that they had a network of relationships, a sense of community, and a shared tradition that was distinct from other Confucians of their era. Yet there are limits to how rigorously the fellowship can be delineated because it was somewhat elastic, with some change of membership over time. Some major members were even read out of the tradition by subsequent generations. Although complicating our usage of the term, such changes highlight an evolution within Confucian circles. Because Chu Hsi edited the texts of – and passed judgments on – those within the tradition, he made it difficult for later scholars to retrieve the ideas and significance of some figures in the twelfth century.

Through the process of developing into an orthodoxy, the relative diversity originally within *Tao-hsüeh* became so obscured as to be unrecoverable, even by modern scholars. Although some progress in retrieval has recently been made, there is a need for greater understanding of the thinkers and issues prevalent during the Southern Sung. To that end, this chapter will sketch some of the variety of views within *Tao-hsüeh*, along with some of the exchanges

⁸ Charles Hartman, "Bibliographic notes on Sung historical works: The original *Record of the way and its destiny* (*Tao-ming lu*) by Li Hsin-ch'uan," *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies* 30 (2000), pp. 1–61; and "Li Hsin-ch'uan and the historical image of late Sung *Tao-hsüeh*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 61 No. 2 (December 2001), pp. 317–58. See also Li K'o-hung, *Li Hsin-ch'uan shih-chi chu-tso pien-nien* (Chengtu, 1990); and John W. Chaffee, "Sung biographies, supplementary No. 2: Li Hsin-ch'uan (1167–1244)," *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies* 24 (1994), pp. 205–15.

among individuals that helped to shape their ideas and define *Tao-hsiieh* itself. Chu Hsi remains central. No attempt will be made to recapitulate his whole philosophical system, however. Summaries of his philosophy are numerous and readily available.⁹ The present study will seek to meet the need to view Chu Hsi developing within the context of a number of representative *Tao-hsiieh* Confucians thinking about the issues of their times.

THE FIRST PERIOD, 1127–1162

Although only a small minority of Confucian scholar-officials, *Tao-hsiieh* men attained national prominence during the early 1130s. Struggling to set up his court in the South, Kao-tsung (r. 1127–62) employed talented men irrespective of their intellectual associations. Lü Hao-wen (1064–1131) and Chao Ting (1085–1147), two leading chief councilors during the first ten years of Kao-tsung's reign, favored those associated with the *Tao-hsiieh* fellowship. Such *Tao-hsiieh* men won top honors in the national *chin-shih* (presented scholar, metropolitan graduate) examinations of 1132 and 1135. It was rumored that the next chief examiner (*chih kung-chü*) would be Chu Chen (1072–1138), who already had served as tutor to the heir apparent. Chu Chen became so confident that in 1136 he told the emperor that *Tao-hsiieh* possessed the unique transmission of the Confucian *Tao*. After Mencius (372–289 BC) died, the *Tao* of the ancient sages (*sheng-jen*) had not been transmitted until Ch'eng I and his elder brother Ch'eng Hao (1032–85) restored the transmission and their disciples conveyed it to the South.¹⁰ Although common within the *Tao-hsiieh* fellowship, this special claim, here articulated by Chu Chen, had not previously been declared at the Sung court.

Conventional scholar-officials quickly challenged this *Tao-hsiieh* claim as presumptuous. Ch'en Kung-fu (1077–1142) pointed to the danger of partisans, such as the Ch'engs, who demanded conformity to one set of ideas. Prohibiting such private views from influencing the civil service examinations was the only way to ensure open and thorough discussion of state policies at court. Ch'en further branded as wild and dishonest the contention that the *Tao* of the sages had been lost until recovered by the Ch'engs. Wearing "big hats and broad sleeves, and with lofty gaze walking in measured

⁹ Although most major studies will be cited in the notes of this chapter, a more complete list may conveniently be found in the bibliographies to Tillman, *Confucian discourse*, and *Chu Hsi te ssu-wei shih-chieh*. Some particularly important studies of his intellectual and political development are given in note 20 below.

¹⁰ Even though the immediate context here refers specifically to the learning of the Ch'engs, this historical source and other Southern Sung writings elsewhere occasionally use "Ch'eng learning (*Ch'eng hsiieh*)" and other terms to refer to the *Tao-hsiieh* group and tradition.

steps," *Tao-hsüeh* men irked Ch'en with their pretentious display of seriousness in observing ancient rites.¹¹

Hu An-kuo (1074–1138), a senior court official and associate of Ch'eng I, sought to alleviate concerns raised by Ch'en Kung-fu's depiction of *Tao-hsüeh* men as wild and vile. Addressing the emperor, Hu pointed out that the Ch'engs were associates of such conservative Yüan-yü party leaders as Ssu-ma Kuang and Lü Kung-tso (1018–89) and had as disciples such respected personages as Yang Shih (1053–1135). Hu dismissed Ch'en Kung-fu as simply continuing the reform partisans' slander against these respected conservative statesmen, hence he sought to reinforce the identification of *Tao-hsüeh* with the Yüan-yü conservatives. Reiterating the claim that the Ch'engs had revived the transmission of the *Tao*, Hu argued that the Ch'engs had rendered the wisdom of the ancients more intelligible to Sung Confucians.

The emperor decided against *Tao-hsüeh*, however. Kao-tsung ordered notices posted in government schools admonishing students to study classical Confucian teachings, instead of those by petty individuals of recent times. Ignoring the hawkish advice of *Tao-hsüeh* men, the emperor worked through his chief councilor Ch'in Kuei (1090–1155) to make peace with the Jurchen Chin (1115–1234). Exercising administrative power as chief councilor from 1138 to 1155, Ch'in Kuei suppressed dissent. He pejoratively characterized *Tao-hsüeh* as a narrow "special-approach learning" and had its adherents excluded from the civil service examinations.¹²

Chang Chiu-ch'eng

Among those whom Ch'in Kuei eventually exiled, Chang Chiu-ch'eng (1092–1159) was one of the rising *Tao-hsüeh* talents of the 1130s.¹³ Having ranked first on the 1132 *chin-shih* examination, Chang began his career in the Ministry of Rites (*Li-pu*); moreover, Kao-tsung personally asked him for advice on

¹¹ Li, *Tao ming lu* 3, especially p. 6a. On the political controversy surrounding *Tao-hsüeh*, see also Ch'en Pang-chan et al., eds., *Sung shih chi-shih pen-mo*, 3 vols. (1605; Peking, 1977) 80, pp. 867–96; Conrad Schirokauer, "Neo-Confucians under attack: The condemnation of *wei-hsüeh*," in *Crisis and prosperity in Sung China*, ed. John Winthrop Haeger (Tucson, 1975), pp. 163–98; John Winthrop Haeger, "The intellectual context of Neo-Confucian syncretism," *Journal of Asian Studies* 31 No. 1 (May 1972), pp. 499–513; James T. C. Liu (Liu Tzu-chien), "How did a Neo-Confucian school become the state orthodoxy?" *Philosophy East and West* 23 No. 4 (October 1973), pp. 483–505, and elaborated upon in his *China turning inward*.

¹² *Tao-hsüeh* and moralistic historians have, in turn, tarnished the historical image of Ch'in Kuei and his emperor; see the studies by Charles Hartman, "The making of a villain: Ch'in Kuei and Tao-hsüeh," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 58 No. 1 (June 1998), pp. 59–146; and Wang Tseng-yü, *Huang-yen wu-tao Sung Kao-tsung* (Shih-chia-chuang, 1999).

¹³ Togto (T'o-t'o) et al., eds., *Sung shih* (hereafter *SS*) (Peking, 1977) 374, pp. 11577–9; Teng K'o-ming, *Chang Chiu-ch'eng ssu-hsiang chib yen-chiu* (Taipei, 1990).

several occasions. Nevertheless, outspoken criticism of Ch'in's appeasement policy resulted in his exile for fourteen years.

While in exile, Chang communicated extensively with the leading Buddhist teacher of the era, Ta-hui Tsung-kao (1089–1163).¹⁴ Ta-hui was a spokesman for lettered Ch'an that sought reconciliation between Ch'an monks and Confucian literati through reinterpretations of the Classics. Many later perceptions of Chang have been transmitted through Buddhist sources. Although Chang still regarded Confucianism as superior to Buddhism in terms of social ethic and spiritual cultivation, he was similar to most *Tao-hsiieh* men of his generation in being receptive to synthesizing Confucian and Ch'an ideas. Chang's commentaries on the *Mencius* (*Meng-tzu*) and the *Doctrine of the mean* (*Chung-yung*) drew inspiration from Ta-hui's teachings.

Chang's conception of "the investigation of things" displayed his synthesis of the Ch'engs' teachings and Ch'an Buddhism. The purpose of the investigation of things was to know *li* (principle, i.e. inherent pattern or order evident in coherence and rightness). He inherited Ch'eng Hao's emphasis on principle as inherently in, but having priority over, human feelings, as well as Ch'eng I's accent on principle as the origin or foundation of all things. Like Ch'eng I, he advocated the investigation of things as the method and priority of learning. Nonetheless, he was most interested in achieving oneness with all things through this means of self-cultivation. Hence his goal appeared similar to the introspection and enlightenment experience advocated by Ch'an monks.

Likewise, Chang's understanding of the *hsin* (mind-and-heart) revealed traces of Ch'an thinking. In contrast to Chu Hsi's sharp differentiation between *chüeh* (consciousness) and the Confucian virtue of *jen* (humaneness or human kindness), Chang identified the two together as the human mind. The word *chüeh* refers both to perception and to empathy arising from awareness of others' suffering. From consciousness as perception, he went on to identify the mind with principle. Some of his statements suggest a Ch'an-like idealism: "The manifold things of the world all arise from within the mind."¹⁵ Elsewhere, he clarified his position while discussing the need for the mind to comprehend the principles inherent within it. Once one apprehended these principles, "the Six Classics (*liu-ching*) were all things within one's own mind."¹⁶ Such slogans – especially if taken out of the context of his own erudition on the Classics – appeared to later Confucians, such as Chu Hsi, to be

¹⁴ Yü Chün-fang, "Ta-hui Tsung-kao and Kung-an Ch'an," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 6 (1979), pp. 211–35; Miriam L. Levering, "Ch'an enlightenment for laymen: Ta-hui and the new religious culture of the Sung" (diss., Harvard University, 1978); and "Dahui Zonggao and Zhang Shangying: The importance of a scholar in the education of a Song Chan master," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 30 (2000), pp. 115–39.

¹⁵ Chang Chiu-ch'eng, *Meng-tzu chuan* (*Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* ed.) 27, p. 20b.

¹⁶ Chang Chiu-ch'eng, *Heng-pu wen-chi* (1614 ed.; Shanghai, 1925) 18, p. 7a.

Ch'an-like dismissals of the primary importance of classical texts. Although lettered Ch'an monks devoted much of their energy to the study of Buddhist and Confucian classics, they still regarded their shared (Buddha) mind as the locus of authority, thus Confucian critics often portrayed them as dismissing the Classics.

Given Chang's examples of the kinds of things within the mind, it would appear that he was not really advocating a philosophical idealism according to which things are projections of the mind. Instead of such speculative philosophy, Chang's writings focused on Confucian values, especially humaneness and spiritual cultivation. Even though he had little to say about the details of governance, he urged people to see the *Tao* in the functions of daily life.

Chang's standing among the first generation of Southern Sung *Tao-hsüeh* Confucians is evident from the earliest extant anthology of *Tao-hsüeh* works. The *Chu ju ming-tao chi* (*Writings by various Confucians for propagating the Tao*) was compiled around the early 1160s by some unspecified students of Chang Chiu-ch'eng.¹⁷ They obviously regarded Chang as the culmination of the tradition because they ended their compilation with Chang's work, the *Jih hsin* (Daily renewal).

Hu Hung

As Hu An-kuo's son, Hu Hung was given titular rank and opportunities to hold office; however, he never served because of his opposition to the peace policies of Ch'in Kuei. Replying to an inquiry from Ch'in Kuei, he declined to serve, but did convey his fondness for the Yüeh-lu Shu-yüan (Mountain slope or Marchmount Hill Academy) at Ch'ang-sha (T'an-chou). The chief counselor sought to oblige him by appointing him head of the academy. Although his family was from the flourishing southeastern coastal area of Fu-chien, Hu opted to teach for twenty years in Hu-nan (modern Hu-nan province), an economically peripheral region. Except for several memorials advocating ethics reform and war against the Jurchen, Hu did not engage in politics, yet he did not withdraw from the problems of the day. He simply gave much greater priority to the cultural crises: "*Tao-hsüeh* is waning, and customs and doctrines are decadent; we disciples ought to dedicate our lives to shouldering this burden."¹⁸ Hu presented *Tao-hsüeh* as a way of learning and an intellectual tradition of which he and his associates were disciples.

¹⁷ Anonymous, *Chu ju ming-tao chi* (Fu-chien, 1236 ed.; photoreproduced as *Chu ju ming-tao* in publication series K'ung-tzu wen-hua ta-ch'üan (Chi-nan, 1992). On this text, see Ch'en Lai, "Lüeh lun *Chu ju ming-tao chi*," *Peking ta-hsüeh hsüeh-pao* 1 (1986), pp. 30-8.

¹⁸ Hu Hung, *Wu-feng chi* (*Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* ed.) 2, p. 86a; or *Hu Hung chi*, ed. Wu Jen-hua (Peking, 1987), p. 147. On the place of the Hu family in the development of *Tao-hsüeh*, see Hans van Ess, *Von Ch'eng I zu*

Having inherited his father's orientation within the larger *Tao-hsiieh* tradition, Hu Hung focused largely on issues of historiography, orthodoxy, and ethics. Writing a history of antiquity, the *Huang wang ta-chi* (*Great records of emperors and kings*), Hu Hung applied moralizing principles from his father's commentary on the *Spring and autumn annals* (*Ch'un-ch'iu*). Few early *Tao-hsiieh* thinkers outside the Hu family (and the Lü family, to be discussed later) wrote histories. The Hu family was even more of an anomaly in its uncompromising hostility toward Buddhism. Rather than seeking common ground, as most of the disciples of the Ch'eng brothers did, Hu Hung bitterly denounced Ch'an Buddhism as a depraved heterodoxy. With such anxiety about combating Buddhism and making ethical judgments about historical institutions and personages, Hu addressed – within the classification set forth earlier – levels of discourse above and below the middle level of cultural values, which Chang Chiu-ch'eng had engaged.

On the level of speculation about nonempirical principles, Hu centered on *hsing* (inner or human nature) as the essence or foundation of all things. Principles were more specific to individual things, hence, implicitly in Hu's writings, inner nature was a higher concept than principle, the primary term in Ch'eng I's philosophical system. Hu also linked the inner nature and the mind as aspects of one reality. According to Hu, sages could not actually name the *Tao*; however, they designated its essence as the inner nature and its function as the mind. Moreover, the nature referred to the state before expression in feelings or actions, and the mind referred to the state after expression. Besides cognition, the mind had the role of governor, even the task to bring the inner nature to completion or fulfillment. Learning should strive to regain and restrain this mind that so easily went astray. If that mind was apprehended and preserved, it could be extended to become one with *t'ien* (Heaven). (Although conventionally translated as Heaven, *t'ien* is markedly different from the common meaning of that term in Western religions. *T'ien* covers a spectrum of meanings from nature or the azure heavens to the consciousness or lord in the heavens.¹⁹) The conception of Heaven plays an important role as the directed

Chu Hsi: Die Lehre vom rechten Weg in der Überlieferung der Familie Hu (Wiesbaden, 2003). On Hu Hung, see SS 345, pp. 12922–6; Herbert Franke, ed., *Sung biographies*, 4 vols. (Weisbaden, 1976), pp. 438–40; Ch'ang Pi-te et al., eds., *Sung jen chuan chi tzu-liao so-yin* (Taipei, 1974–6), Volume 2, pp. 1558–9; Mou Ts'ung-san, *Hsin-t'i yü hsing-t'i*, 3 vols. (Taipei, 1968–9), Volume 2, pp. 429–535; Conrad Schirokauer, "Chu Hsi and Hu Hung," in *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh) (Honolulu, 1986), pp. 480–502; Conrad Schirokauer, "Hu Hung's rebuttal of Ssu-ma Kuang's critique of Mencius," in *Chung yang yen chiu yüan kuo chi Han hsiieh hui i lun wen chi* (Taipei, 1981), pp. 437–58; and "Hu Hung as historian," in *The new and the multiple: Sung senses of the past*, ed. Thomas H. C. Lee (Li Hung-ch'i) (Hong Kong, 2004), pp. 121–61.

¹⁹ See diversity evident in discussions by Hoyt Cleveland Tillman (T'ien Hao), "Consciousness of *t'ien* in Chu Hsi's thought," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47 No. 1 (June 1987), pp. 31–50; Chan, *Chu*

goal of one's self-cultivation. With Hu's conception of the relation between inner nature and mind, self-cultivation should not focus on the inner nature, but only on the mind in its incipient stage of action or expression before it attained oneness with Heaven.

Implicitly, there was a tension in Hu's thinking about the priority between the mind and inner nature. Even though he defined inner nature as the essence of all things and mind as its function, he also gave the mind the role of governor to bring the inner nature to completion. How could the mind, as the function or manifestation of the inner nature, have such a commanding role over that which was its essence? Hu's brief and undated statements in his *Chih-yen* (*Understanding of words*) were open to diverse interpretation and failed to set forth the rigorous philosophical distinctions that the next generation would regard as requisite for a synthetic *Tao-hsüeh* philosophy. Still, his suggestive insights provided the next generation with a text from which to discuss major concepts.

In the inhospitable climate during Ch'in Kuei's dominance, such teachers as Hu Hung and Chang Chiu-ch'eng had managed to preserve and in small ways develop different branches of the *Tao-hsüeh* tradition in diverse directions. With Ch'in Kuei's death in 1155, pressure on *Tao-hsüeh* Confucians eased; moreover, Hu and Chang survived until 1159 and 1161 respectively, so they remained active until almost the end of the first period. As evident in the *Chu ju ming-tao chi*, which was compiled soon after the beginning of the next period, Chang's more syncretic view of *Tao-hsüeh* and more tolerant stance toward Ch'an literati Buddhism enjoyed more prominence than Hu Hung's fundamentalistic hostility toward Buddhism. The leaders, including Chu Hsi, who would emerge to dominate the second period, were initially influenced by syncretic trends within the *Tao-hsüeh* fellowship. Changes in the political climate would give this next generation greater latitude to develop philosophical positions more systematically and to delineate the tradition more clearly.

THE SECOND PERIOD, 1163-1181

A shift in sociopolitical culture followed in the wake of a Jurchen invasion in 1161. In the summer of 1162, Kao-tsung abdicated, and the new emperor Hsiao-tsung (r. 1162-89) called for frank advice from all intellectuals and officials. Advocating war and reforms, *Tao-hsüeh* Confucians responded

Hsi: *New studies*, pp. 184-96; Kojima Tsuyoshi, *Sōgaku no keisei to tenkai* (Tōkyō, 1999), pp. 6-77; and Chung Tsai-chün, *The development of the concepts of Heaven and of man in the philosophy of Chu Hsi* (Taipei, 1993). For the classical period, see Robert Eno, *The Confucian creation of Heaven: Philosophy and defense of ritual mastery* (Albany, 1990).

enthusiastically. Excitement waned after the emperor opted for a peace treaty ending, in 1164, the second Chin war. Still, the new treaty was less unequal than the one signed in 1141. Comparative success in defending the realm and negotiating peace encouraged a sense of assurance and security. The crisis and the ensuing peace together enhanced, somewhat paradoxically, both fundamentalistic fervor to defend the Confucian tradition and a climate of relative peace and confidence for defining the tradition.

The difference of political climate in this second period was reflected in the national *chin-shih* examinations. Taking as a sample the dates in all known cases of those who would be listed in the 1190s either as members of the "spurious learning" (*wei-hsiieh*) faction of *Tao-hsiieh* or as their attackers, there appears to be no significant differential in terms of age, status, or geographical origin. However, of those who attacked *Tao-hsiieh*, 43 percent won their degrees during the first period, and 57 percent during the second period. Only 14 percent of the *Tao-hsiieh* group received degrees during the first period, but 86 percent did so during the second period. The difference is particularly telling for the 1172–81 decade: 44 percent of the *Tao-hsiieh* men, but less than 5 percent of their attackers, earned their degrees during that ten-year period. The tide turned in 1172 when Lü Tsu-ch'ien (1137–81) served as one of the two chief examiners and in that one examination passed over 19 percent of those included on the *Tao-hsiieh* list of 1197. Even if his father's death necessitated his departure before all the grading was complete, Lü's impact is clear: despite state safeguards to prevent examiners from knowing the identity of essay writers and prohibitions against favoritism, Lü had such keen insight into literary styles that, even though he had earlier read only a couple of Lu Chiu-yüan's (1139–93) short pieces, he recognized Lu's examination essay. So politically secure was Lü that he announced his discovery of Lu's paper, and was not even reprimanded. As the trend in the examinations in favor of *Tao-hsiieh* at the expense of more conventional Confucians became more and more apparent, however, critics began to make official complaints in 1180.

Freed from having to endure governmental disfavor, *Tao-hsiieh* teachers during the second period enjoyed the leisure to develop their own ideas and the freedom to attract much larger numbers of students. Major thinkers during this period sought to disentangle *Tao-hsiieh* from Buddhist ideas and to foster greater consciousness of one unique Confucian fellowship.

Much of the difference between this period and the earlier one can be illustrated through Chu Hsi's intellectual development.²⁰ The turmoil and

²⁰ SS 429, pp. 12751–70; Franke, ed., *Sung biographies*, pp. 282–90; Wang Mao-hung, *Chu-tzu nien-p'u* (1700 ed., Taipei, 1966). Of the major studies on Chu, see particularly Kim Yung Sik, *The natural philosophy of Chu Hsi* (1130–1200) (Philadelphia, 2000), and its Chinese version, *Chu Hsi te tzu-jan*

uncertainties during Kao-tsung's reign dominated Chu Hsi's childhood. Having protested against the national policy of peace with the Jurchen, his father, Chu Sung (1097–1143), was demoted to a local post in Fu-chien and cashiered soon thereafter. After Chu turned ten, his father, who had been a student of Yang Shih, devoted three years to teaching him about the philosophy of the Ch'eng brothers and the historical writings of Ssu-ma Kuang. Nearing death, his father entrusted his education to three neighboring Confucians with some grounding in the legacy of the Ch'engs. Although one of the three, Hu Hsien (1082–1162), was a first cousin to Hu Hung, they did not partake of the Hu family hostility against Buddhism and Taoism, but rather reflected a more accommodative spirit toward Buddhism, which Chang Chiu-ch'eng typified. During Chu Hsi's teens, death claimed not only his father but also his two brothers and two of the three neighboring scholars in charge of his education. Besides encouraging a fascination for Ta-hui's Ch'an Buddhism, the trauma of these deaths contributed to his apparent sense of mission as a survivor and his emerging sense of independence, after being deprived of any one particularly dominant teacher. Without the influence of a single mentor over a long period of time, Chu was apparently more conditioned than most Confucians to set out on a more independent quest for intellectual certainty and authority.

During the last ten years of the first period, Chu Hsi's thinking shifted fundamentally. In 1153 for the first time, he sought instruction from Li T'ung (1093–1163), who had been a disciple of Yang Shih and highly praised by Chu's father as a dedicated follower of the Ch'engs. Li rebuked Chu Hsi for his enthusiasm for Taoism and Buddhism and urged him to concentrate on the Confucianism of the Ch'engs. In 1159, Chu Hsi compiled his first book, *Shang-ts'ai yü-lei* (*Recorded conversations of Hsieh Liang-tso*). Although this marked a major step toward concentrating on the school of the Ch'eng brothers, Hsieh Liang-tso (1050–1103) had been the most inclined toward Buddhism of all the major first-generation disciples of the Ch'engs.

che-hsiieh, trans. P'an Wen-kuo (Shanghai, 2003); Shu Ching-nan, *Chu-tzu ta-ch'üan* (Fu-chou, 1992); Shu Ching-nan, *Chu Hsi nien-p'u ch'ang-p'ien* (Shanghai, 2001); Ch'en Lai, *Chu Hsi che-hsiieh yen-chiu* (Peking, 1987; Taipei, 1990); Ch'en Lai, *Chu-tzu shu-hsin pien-nien k'ao-cheng* (Shanghai, 1989); Chan, *Chu Hsi: New studies*; Brian E. McKnight, "Chu Hsi and his world," in *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh) (Honolulu, 1986), pp. 408–36; Conrad Schirokauer, "Chu Hsi as an administrator, a preliminary study," in *Études Song: Sung studies in memoriam Étienne Balazs*, ed. Françoise Aubin (Paris, 1976), pp. 207–36; Conrad Schirokauer, "Chu Hsi's political career: A study in ambivalence," in *Confucian personalities*, ed. Arthur F. Wright and Denis C. Twitchett (Stanford, 1962), pp. 162–88; Chung Tsai-chün and Chang Chi-lin, eds., *Kuo-chi Chu-tzu hsiieh-bui-i lun-wen-chi*, 3 vols. (Taipei, 1993); Chung Tsai-chün, ed., *Chu Hsi te k'ai-chan*, 2 vols. (Taipei, 2002); and Chu Chieh-jen, ed., *Mai-ju 21 shih-chieh te Chu-tzu-hsiieh, chi-nien Chu Hsi tan-ch'ien 870 chou-nien shih-shih 800 chou-nien, lun-wen-chi* (Shanghai, 2001).

By the mid-1160s, Chu had adopted Li's hostility toward the syncretism of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism to such an extent that he wrote a major rebuttal of the prevailing trend. Chu had completed, by 1166, this *Tsa-hsiieh pien* (*Critique of adulterated learning*) to refute Su Shih's comments on the *Book of changes* (*I-ching*), Su Ch'e's (1039–1112) on the *Lao-tzu*, Chang Chiu-ch'eng's on the *Doctrine of the mean*, and Lü Pen-chung's (1084–1145) on the *Great learning* (*Ta-hsiieh*). Chu argued that the Sus, Chang and Lü had adulterated the interpretation of the Confucian classics with Taoist and Buddhist ideas.²¹ Chu's *Critique of adulterated learning* marked a decisive break with the syncretic leanings of his youth and launched his personal campaign against what he now regarded as deviant orientations within Confucianism.

Chu's first commentary on the *Analects* (*Lun-yü*), completed in 1163, accepted the Ch'engs as the interpretative standard for the Classics. In his 1177 commentaries on the *Analects* and the *Mencius*, he rejected most interpretations offered by the Ch'engs' disciples.²² Another 1177 publication, the *Chou I pen-i* (*Original meaning of the Chou dynasty Book of changes*), even questioned Ch'eng I's philosophic interpretation of the *Book of changes*.²³ By deciding who and what to include in his various works, Chu Hsi matured from a student of the *Tao-hsiieh* tradition to an authority on it.

Chu Hsi's own work on issues within the *Tao-hsiieh* tradition evolved in communication with others who were also sorting through texts left by diverse thinkers from three generations and striving for a more systematic presentation of the tradition. A change of generations was occurring. Chang Chiu-ch'eng, Hu Hung, and Li T'ung had all died by 1163. A generation born in the first decade of the Southern Sung had come to maturity and began to dominate the dialogue on Confucian values: Chu Hsi, Lu Chiu-ling (1132–80), Chang Shih (1133–80), and Lü Tsu-ch'ien. All except Chu died in 1180 or 1181. Chu, Chang, and Lü were known as the three worthies of the southeast and headed the major branches of *Tao-hsiieh* during the second period. They shared much of the same agenda – symbolized by all three being at the capital

²¹ Chu Hsi, *Hui-an hsien-sheng Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* (*Ssu-pu pei-yao* ed., entitled *Chu-tzu ta-ch'üan*) 72, pp. 16a–46a, especially 46a; Ichiki Tsuyuhiko, "Shushi no 'Zatsugaku ken' to sono shühen," *Sōdai no shakai to sōkyō*, ed. Sōdaishi kenkyūkai (Tōkyō, 1985), pp. 3–49.

²² See John Makeham, *Transmitters and creators: Chinese commentators and commentaries on the Analects* (Cambridge, MA, 2003), chapters 6–8; Ts'ai Fang-lu, *Chu Hsi ching-hsiieh yü Chung-kuo ching-hsiieh* (Peking, 2004); and Wang Hui-min, *Sung-tai ching-hsiieh chih yen-chiu* (Taipei, 1989).

²³ On views of the *Changes*, see Kidder Smith Jr., Peter K. Bol, Joseph Adler, and Don J. Wyatt, eds., *Sung dynasty uses of the I Ching* (Princeton, 1990); and Tseng Ch'un-hai, *Chu-tzu I-hsiieh t'an-wei* (Taipei, 1983). On the classic *Book of poetry*, see Achim Mittag, "Notes on the genesis and early reception of Chu Hsi's *Shih chi-chuan*: Some facets for reevaluation of Sung classical learning," in *Chung-kuo chin-shih she-hui wen-hua-shih lun-wen-chi*, ed. Chung-yang yen-chiu-yüan li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so (Taipei, 1992), pp. 721–80; and Tsou Ch'i-ch'ang, *Chu Hsi Shih-ching chuan-shih-hsiieh mei-shu yen-chiu* (Peking, 2004).

in 1163 during the height of Sung hopes for a restoration of control over the North. In subsequent personal visits and letters, their friendships deepened, and their exchange of ideas promoted their mutual development and their collective perception of the *Tao-hsüeh* fellowship and tradition.

Issues between Chang Shih and Chu Hsi

When he first met Chu Hsi in 1163, Chang Shih had been summoned to the capital to prepare the way for the return of his father, Chang Chün² (1096–1164). Although the father's hawkish plans had failed during Kao-tsung's reign, he was now needed for the renewed war against the Chin. During the military emergency, Chang Shih played a major role in assisting his father. Afterwards, he served in various central and prefectural posts. A call to moral rearmament ranked near the top of his agenda as an official. He proclaimed: "In this world, human ethics cannot be neglected for a single day; if neglected, the country would follow in decline."²⁴ Emphasis upon education arose from his perception of pervasive spiritual degeneration that resulted from scholars' disregarding Confucian teachings. "Our Confucians" had to be differentiated from the prevailing host of heterodox and adulterated teachings.

Chang's Confucian education so impressed Chu Hsi that he conceded that Chang had obtained the *Tao* earlier and more easily. Although he was three years senior to Chang and sometimes critical of Chang's scholarship, Chu acknowledged that Chang's "knowledge is so outstanding as to be unreachable, and having been in his company for a long time, I've repeatedly gotten a lot from him."²⁵ After the triumph of Chu's version of *Tao-hsüeh*, scholars have emphasized Chu's originality and profundity at the expense of Chang's contributions to their mutually beneficial relationship.

On spiritual self-cultivation

In a protracted discussion of the concepts of inner equilibrium and harmony, Chang Shih and Chu Hsi wrestled with varying traditions and methods for cultivating oneself to become a good person.²⁶ For instance, what should the

²⁴ Chang Shih, *Nan-hsiian hsien-sheng wen-chi* (1849 ed.; Taipei, 1975) 9, p. 3a. See SS 429, pp. 12770–5, Franke, ed., *Sung biographies*, pp. 11–13; Chan, *Chu Hsi: New studies*, pp. 396–423; and the essays on his life and thought that are attached to Takahata Tsunenobu, *Chō Nan-ken shū jimmei sakuin* (Nagoya, 1975).

²⁵ SYHA 50, p. 1635. See also SS 429, p. 12775; Chan, *Chu Hsi: New studies*, pp. 396–404.

²⁶ Chu and Chang's exchange on equilibrium and harmony has been extensively investigated by Chinese and Japanese scholars. The most important ones include Ch'ien, *Chu-tzu hsün hsüeh-an*, Volume 2, pp. 138–82; Mou, *Hsin-t'i yü' hsing-t'i*, Volume 3, pp. 71–228; Wang, *Chu-tzu nien-p'u* 1A, pp. 23–7 and 1B, pp. 35–42; Ch'en, *Chu-tzu che-hsüeh yen-chiu*, pp. 91–188; and Tomoeda Ryūtarō, *Shushī no shisō keisei*

relative priority be between such activities as transcendental meditation and ethical praxis? The *Doctrine of the mean* had identified centrality or inner equilibrium (*chung*) as the state before the feelings were aroused and harmony (*ho*) as the state after the feelings were aroused – if the feelings were appropriately expressed. According to the *Mean*, attaining equilibrium and harmony was the key to achieving oneness with Heaven and the myriad things, hence this was a person's utmost ethical imperative. Out of the diversity of Northern Sung views about such internalized discipline, two distinct approaches developed within twelfth-century *Tao-hsiieh*. The Fu-chien tradition from Yang Shih and Li T'ung emphasized quiet sitting in meditation as the way to clarify the mind by expelling selfish desires; thereupon the mind could serve as the foundation for praxis in daily activities. Another tradition evolved in Hu-nan, where Chang Shih expanded upon Hu Hung's focus on the mind's actual experience in daily affairs. Rather than engaging in transcendental meditation, one should utilize the mind's potential for apprehending principles just as they began to be manifest in action.

Chu Hsi had been taught by Li T'ung, but his contact with Chang Shih led him to doubt the meditational approach. A fundamental question for Chu was: how could the active mind perceive its own tranquil state before action? Although he had earlier sought for mastery of self-cultivation within the Fu-chien approach, Chu's attention turned to Hu-nan methods during a two-month visit with Chang in 1167. After almost two years during which he followed much of the Hu-nan technique for apprehending incipient principles in activity, Chu confessed to his students that his abandonment of his own teacher's Fu-chien approach to self-cultivation had resulted in a declining ethical vigor. Anxious about his predicament, he pushed beyond both his teacher and his friend to wrestle more directly with the writings of the Ch'eng brothers.

Writing to his Hu-nan friends, Chu Hsi pointed to selections from Ch'eng I's works to resolve apparent inconsistencies in the passages upon which they had been focusing. Hu-nan scholars had been wrong to follow Ch'eng I's apparent identification of the mind only with the state after the feelings were aroused. Chu Hsi now perceived that Ch'eng I had corrected himself. Master Ch'eng's mature position had recognized the oneness of mind both with essence – the state of quietness and inactivity – and with

(Tōkyō, 1969), pp. 38–102. For English accounts, see especially Liu Shu-hsien, "On Chu Hsi's search for equilibrium and harmony," in *Harmony and strife: Contemporary perspectives, east and west*, ed. Liu Shu-hsien and Robert E. Allinson (Hong Kong, 1988), pp. 249–70; Cheng Chung-ying, "Chu Hsi's methodology and theory of understanding," in *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh) (Honolulu, 1986), pp. 179–86; Thomas A. Metzger, *Escape from predicament: Neo-Confucianism and China's evolving political culture* (New York, 1977), pp. 85–9; Chan, *Chu Hsi: New studies*, pp. 409–16.

function – the state of active penetration of all things. Thereupon Ch'eng I had established a twofold path: abiding in reverent seriousness, and engaging in study. Drawing upon this dual method, Chu now had a complete view of equilibrium and harmony. No longer did he need to await activity before engaging in the cultivation process of examining and then nourishing the mind. Writing a preface around 1172 to an earlier essay on equilibrium, he further explained his evolution from the Fu-chien view of cultivation through Chang Shih's to his own synthesis of both traditions. Nonetheless, because Chu in his later years spoke mostly in terms of preserving the mind, his dual approach to cultivating the mind gradually departed even further from the approach that he had once shared with his Hu-nan friends.

The evolution of Chu's thought on this issue was of major significance. First, he had synthesized his predecessors into a new approach. Reverent seriousness, as emphasized by Ch'eng I, provided a better grounding for self-cultivation than Ch'eng Hao's advice on calming or settling the inner nature. Ch'eng Hao's approach had encouraged responding to things as they happened, hence his penchant was already less passive than Chou Tun-i's (1017–73) theme of tranquility, in which one emptied one's mind of passions. By further incorporating the Hu-nan approach of apprehending principles in daily activity with the Fu-chien tradition of meditation, Chu's synthesis yielded a greater role for book-learning. With its more reflective and intuitive understanding of the mind, the Fu-chien tradition, in particular, had displayed much less enthusiasm for textual scholarship. After reaching his synthesis, Chu became more dedicated to a life of scholarship and prolific as a writer. Second, in abandoning the Fu-chien tradition of his teacher and later altering it, Chu passed through a crucial phase of inner tension. Such maturation apparently provided a sense of liberation and self-confidence, for he thereafter made greater progress in critically evaluating and restructuring the Confucian tradition. Third, Chang Shih's Hu-nan conceptions of nature as essence and the mind as its function prompted Chu to seek a resolution to the conflict between the two traditions specifically in terms of essence and function. Chang thus served as a catalyst in what is widely regarded as the most crucial watershed of Chu's development as a Confucian theorist.

On humaneness (*jen*)

Although in antiquity *jen* had denoted manly qualities of the nobility, Confucius (551–479 BC) transformed the word to point to the perfect ethical virtue of the truly superior person. Confucius and his early disciples never provided a fixed definition. According to Chu Hsi, any definition would have detracted

from the encompassing character of *jen*; moreover, this virtue should ultimately be grasped in personal experience rather than in discursive reasoning.²⁷ During the Han and T'ang dynasties, Confucians had equated *jen* with love and deeds done out of love. Beginning with the Ch'eng brothers, *Tao-hsiieh* Confucians interpreted it on a cosmic level as the life force that linked all things in oneness. Chu Hsi and Chang Shih had discussed humaneness for years, but it did not emerge as the central question until 1171. By the end of 1173, the two friends had reached general agreement on most points and made final revisions to their two, individual *Jen shuo* (treatises on humaneness).

Chu Hsi's treatise had as its foundation the mind of Heaven and Earth. Chu wrote,

When people and things are given life, they receive the mind of Heaven and Earth as their mind. Therefore, with reference to the virtue [or character] of the mind, although it embraces and penetrates all and leaves nothing to be desired, nevertheless, one word will cover all of it, namely, humaneness.²⁸

Thus, contrary to conventional translations of *hsin chih te*, "virtue of the mind" is probably more apt than "character of the mind" to convey Chu's philosophical standpoint. Although this virtue as principle resides in the mind, it is actually the character of the nature, rather than a characteristic of the mind per se.

Later on in the essay, Chu also identified humaneness as the "principle of love." Joining together "the principle of love" and "the virtue of the mind" soon became for Confucians the standard way to characterize humaneness. Together covering both essence and function, these phrases clarified the character of humaneness more than anyone had been able to do earlier. In the *Hsi ming* (*Western inscription*), Chang Tsai (1020-77) had explicitly addressed the essence of humaneness, but only implicitly its function. Besides clarifying Chang Tsai's essay, Ch'eng I had established the doctrine that humaneness was the foundation for humanity's inner nature, but love was merely a feeling. Chu built upon Ch'eng's doctrine; however, Chu heightened the importance

²⁷ Li Ching-te, *Chu-tzu yü-lei*, ed. Wang Hsing-hsien, 8 vols. (1270; Peking, 1986) 20, p. 470. On the concept, see especially Sato Hitoshi, "Chu Hsi's 'treatise on jen'," in *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh) (Honolulu, 1986), pp. 212-27; Lin Yü-sheng, "The evolution of the pre-Confucian meaning of *jen* and the Confucian concept of moral autonomy," *Monumenta Serica* 31 (1974-5), pp. 172-204; Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh), "The evolution of the Confucian concept *jen*," *Philosophy East and West* 4 No. 4 (January 1955), pp. 295-319; his "Chinese and Western interpretations of *jen* (humanity)," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 2 No. 2 (March 1975), pp. 107-29; and his *Chu Hsi: New studies*, pp. 151-83.

²⁸ Chu, *Hui-an hsien-sheng Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 67, pp. 20a-21b; trans. adapted from Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh), *A source book in Chinese philosophy* (Princeton, 1963), pp. 593-6, who identifies references to earlier sources.

of love and synthesized important components of the Confucian tradition into a balanced essay.

Chang Shih's treatise was also an impressive exposition on humaneness. Calling attention to the four virtues – humaneness, rightness (or righteousness), propriety, and wisdom – inherent within human nature, he proclaimed, in part:

What is called the principle of love is both the mind of Heaven and Earth to give birth to things and that from which things are born. Therefore, humaneness is the chief of the four virtues and can also encompass them . . . When the self-centeredness of the ego has been overcome, there will be an expansive impartiality, and the principle of love which was originally stored in the nature will have nothing blocking it.²⁹

With nothing blocking it, humaneness achieved its oneness with Heaven and Earth. Although humaneness could not be reduced to just love or impartiality, impartiality was the reason why people could be humane and realize the principle of love.

This treatise is so similar to Chu's in tone and content that some scholars, beginning with his own disciple Ch'en Ch'un (1159–1223), have wrongly concluded that it was written by Master Chu (Chu Hsi) himself.³⁰ Given the similarities between the two treatises, it has been important to some scholars, such as Wing-tsit Chan (Ch'en Jung-chieh, 1901–94), to argue that Chu's essay was prior and thus the locus of all originality. Nevertheless, the primary evidence, Chu's 1173 letters to Lü Tsu-ch'ien, not only is inconclusive but also suggests that both treatises continued to be revised through 1173 because of mutual interaction.³¹ It is ultimately impossible to document Chang's full contribution to the discourse because, as the editor of Chang's literary corpus after his death, Chu did not preserve many of Chang's earlier writings and letters on humaneness. What does remain in their collected writings nevertheless indicates that Chang made some contributions to Chu's evolving synthesis on humaneness.

How to characterize the mind of Heaven and Earth was one of the most significant points of contention that developed in their correspondence on

²⁹ Chang Shih, *Nan-hsüan wen-chi* 8, pp. 1a–2a, cf. part trans. in Chan, *Chu Hsi: New studies*, p. 174.

³⁰ Liu Shu-hsien, "Chu-tzu te jen-shuo, t'ai-chi kuan-nien yü tao-t'ung wen-t'i te tsai sheng-ch'a," *Shih-hsüeh p'ing-lun* 5 (1983), pp. 177–81, uses Ch'en Ch'un's view to argue that Chu used some of Chang's draft to write the final treatise while editing Chang's collected works. Wing-tsit Chan (Ch'en Jung-chieh)'s rebuttal is in *Chu Hsi: New studies*, pp. 173–7.

³¹ Chu, *Hui-an hsien-sheng Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 33, pp. 12a, 15a, 18b. Because Chu here reported that Chang had no more doubts about the treatise, Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh, *Chu Hsi: New studies*, especially pp. 155–7, 175), concludes that Chu's treatise had attained its final form already and was therefore earlier than Chang's. But Chu on p. 15a reports recently revising his own treatise *again*. Even if the treatise mentioned on p. 18b was Chang's, it was merely the latest revision.

humaneness. In the *Book of changes*, Confucius had reportedly commented, "The great virtue of Heaven and Earth is to produce [things]." ³² Influenced by this passage, the Ch'eng brothers had proclaimed, "The mind of Heaven and Earth is to produce things." ³³ Chu Hsi incorporated this statement into his treatise. Chang objected to this statement and recommended a similar one from Ch'eng I's commentary, "the mind of Heaven and Earth that produces things." From Chang's perspective, there was a fundamental difference between the two statements. ³⁴ According to Chang, "the mind of Heaven and Earth that produces things" encompassed much more than simply the production of things, but the phrase that Chu had adopted denoted the limitations of such a restriction on the mind. Chang's preferred language reflected the Hu-nan conception of the mind as wondrously transcendent, comprehending all under Heaven and commanding all things. To Chu, both statements simply identified the mind of Heaven and Earth with the function of producing things, yet Chu cared enough about the phraseology that his final treatise retained the wording that had disturbed Chang.

Apparent agreement was reached over a sentence that connected the mind of Heaven and Earth to the mind in people. Chang readily agreed to Chu's proposed statement: "When Heaven and Earth endow human beings and things with the mind of productiveness, this becomes the mind of human beings and things as well." Nonetheless, the sentence conveyed different meanings to the two friends. To Chu, the emphasis was on the warm and gentle feelings of commiseration with which people were endowed so they could love and benefit others. Chang followed other leads from the Ch'engs and emphasized being related as members of one body with all things through all-encompassing humaneness. Chu countered with Ch'eng I's warning against the dangers of an indiscriminating universality. Identifying other things as the self could result in self-negation as absurd as sacrificing oneself to feed a hungry tiger, Chu warned. Compassion would never lead to such extremes, for it was more practical. Still, compassion and love for other things were the effects, rather than the essence, of humaneness. ³⁵ In ethics, we know that some who emphasize love and oneness with others fail to realize that love alone is not a sufficient guide for action. Aware that love by itself does not inform us what we should do for others, Confucians linked love with specific behavioral virtues,

³² Hsi-tz'u (*Appended Remarks*) B/1, trans., Wing-tsit Chan (Ch'en Jung-chieh), *Source book*, p. 268.

³³ Ch'eng Hao and Ch'eng I, *Erb-Ch'eng chi*, ed. Wang Hsiao-yü (Peking, 1981) 2, p. 366 (i.e. originally *Wai-shu* 3).

³⁴ Chang, *Nan-hsüan wen-chi* 21, pp. 4a-5b. See also Sato, "Chu Hsi's 'treatise on jen'," pp. 218-19; Mou, *Hsin-t'i yü hsing-t'i*, Volume 3, pp. 259-61.

³⁵ Chu, *Hui-an hsien-sheng Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 32, pp. 16b-17a, 33b-34b, and Chang, *Nan-hsüan wen-chi* 21, p. 5ab. See also Ch'ien, *Chu-tzu*, Volume 2, pp. 57-66; Sato, "Chu Hsi's 'treatise on jen'," pp. 220-1.

such as doing what is right and being filial, that gave guidelines for decisive action and human bonding. Despite Chu's caricature of Chang's position, Chang was surely not in any real danger of falling into an empty relativity and sentimentality.

Chang's Hu-nan school associated humaneness with the consciousness of the mind. What Chang referred to as "consciousness" was conscience arising from being conscious of others' suffering. Mencius (2A/6) had drawn attention to the mind which could not bear to see others suffer and would spontaneously respond, as though responding to save a child who was about to fall into a well. Hence consciousness denoted spontaneous ethical feelings arising from the mind and inner nature. Following Hsieh Liang-tso and Ch'eng Hao, Hu-nan scholars identified humaneness with the mind's incipient and active functioning. As discussed above, they saw this conception of the mind as the basis for their view of spiritual cultivation. Chang's reassertion of this theme in one of his letters discussing humaneness would suggest that the debate over equilibrium and harmony had not convinced him to abandon as much of his Hu-nan tradition as modern scholars have conventionally assumed.³⁶

In interpreting the Hu-nan position, Chu Hsi chose to understand consciousness as merely a cognitive state of mind. Based on the shared assumption that humaneness encompassed the other Confucian virtues, Chu suggested that it was because humaneness included wisdom (or intelligence) that Hu-nan scholars mistook wisdom for humaneness. He readily agreed that the humane person was of course conscious, but objected that humaneness itself could not be reduced to consciousness. Regarding consciousness as humaneness would presuppose, according to Chu Hsi, using a mind to pursue the mind. As in the debate over cultivating equilibrium and harmony, he had difficulty understanding, or at least accepting, that Hu-nan scholars were talking about intuitive reflection of the mind, rather than using one mind to seek another mind. He argued that the Hu-nan interpretation required the mind instantaneously to make a mistake, observe the mistake, and then become cognizant that humaneness was observing the mistake. Such an approach, he charged, resulted in unnecessary levels of mental stress.³⁷ The incisiveness of this attack is confounded, it seems to me, by his earlier charge that the Hu-nan assumption of humaneness as oneness with all things led to laxness in self-cultivation.

³⁶ The most pronounced case is probably Mou, *Hsin-t'i yü hsing-t'i*, Volume 3, pp. 71-300, *passim*.

³⁷ Chu, *Hui-an hsien-sheng Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 31, pp. 5b-6a, 32, pp. 17a-18a, 20a-b. See discussion in Ch'ien, *Chu-tzu*, Volume 2, pp. 70-2, Mou, *Hsin-t'i yü hsing-t'i*, Volume 3, pp. 273-84, 298; Sato, "Chu Hsi's 'treatise on jen'," pp. 222-3.

How far Chang Shih went in accepting Chu's criticisms can be ascertained only in his answers to his own students, for his reply to Chu's letter about humaneness as consciousness is not extant. In comments to his students, Chang agreed that humaneness could not be reduced merely to consciousness. Nevertheless, he pointed out that what the mind knows is simply humaneness.³⁸ After all, admonitions to know humaneness entailed more than cognitive knowing. Thus, despite Chu's rebuttals, Chang Shih continued to uphold the Hu-nan view of the superiority of an intuitive perception of humaneness.

The modern philosopher Mou Tsung-san (1909–95) found Chu Hsi culpable for perverting what Chang Shih was saying about the mind and humaneness. Placing Chang within the mainstream of Confucianism back through Hu Hung and Ch'eng Hao to Mencius, Professor Mou highlighted their emphasis on humaneness as having no limits and on the mind as innate and spontaneous ethical feelings. Identifying Chu Hsi with Ch'eng I, and ultimately with Hsün-tzu (298–238 BC), Professor Mou portrayed them as reducing the mind to its cognitive function – at the expense of its innately ethical and active qualities. This latter group's passive conception of the mind as cognitive implied that people were dependent on external things to know even the ethical principles inherent within the mind. Thus Chu's overly intellectualized analysis allegedly fragmented the unity of the mind, feeling, and nature that had been set forth by Mencius and Ch'eng Hao. Professor Mou also condemned Chang Shih for inadequately defending the main line of the tradition. Often when Chu cited Master Ch'eng as an authority, Chang was apparently too confused to realize that Ch'eng I's positions were being used to misrepresent Ch'eng Hao's.³⁹

Ch'ien Mu (1895–1990) provided possibly the best answer to Mou Tsung-san's criticism of Chu Hsi. Buddhist philosophy challenged Chu to establish a linkage between mind and principles in a way that would demonstrate that they were not empty. To this end, he identified humaneness with the life force or mind inherent in the cosmos. Attempting to establish a ground for the linkage, Chu said, for example, "The mind of the myriad things is like the mind of Heaven and Earth. The mind of all under Heaven is like the mind of the sages. With Heaven and Earth's giving life to the myriad things, there is a mind of Heaven and Earth in each thing." Given such connection, "For a person of humaneness, the mind is principle." Study and self-cultivation provided a bridge between the individual's mind and the cosmos: "When a scholar disciplines himself in overcoming the ego and returning

³⁸ Chang, *Nan-hsiian wen-chi* 31, pp. 5b–6a; and SYHA 50, p. 1620.

³⁹ Mou, *Hsin-t'i yü hsing-t'i*, Volume 3, pp. 234–300.

to propriety to the point of eliminating egocentric desires completely, then his mind is purely this mind of Heaven and Earth giving life to things."⁴⁰ Through quoting such passages, Professor Ch'ien sought to demonstrate that Chu had a broader view of the mind and one closer to that of Mencius than Mou had asserted. Nevertheless, as Ch'ien also pointed out, Chu was at the same time insistent that people know the difference between mind and humaneness, as well as the ethical gaps generally operative between one's own mind and that of Heaven and Earth. Attentiveness to such gaps and distinctions made Chu object strongly to Hu-nan scholars' views of the mind and humaneness.

Returning to the treatises on humaneness, it is clear that Chu Hsi focused more on theory, and Chang Shih on practice. Chang emphasized overcoming ego, as well as expelling ignorance and desires, whereas Chu balanced overcoming ego with pursuing learning. The most significant difference was that Chang did not utilize Chu's characterization of humaneness as "the virtue of the mind." Later scholars have speculated about why Chang apparently neither adopted nor criticized this characterization.

Actually, the phrase "virtue of the mind" was originally Chang's. A dozen years after the treatises, Chu wrote a letter to Lü Tsu-ch'ien's younger brother in which he mentioned that the phrase was initially put forward by Chang. Responding to Chu's draft, Chang "had wanted to change the words – the virtue of the nature and the foundation of love – into the virtue of the mind and the foundation of the good, as well as to say Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things all share my essence."⁴¹ In the context of this sentence, the phrase was consistent with the Hu-nan concept of the mind. The linkage is even clearer if the phrase is understood as the character of the mind, instead of the virtue of the mind. One wonders if Chang was drawing it from his earlier writings on humaneness, which Chu chose not to preserve. In any event, Chu reminisced in the letter to Lü that he had objected to Chang's suggestion on the grounds that the "character (virtue) of the mind" was too vague and could be easily misinterpreted and even manipulated. Nevertheless, this was the phrase that Chu settled upon for his treatise. When counterbalanced with the principle of love, Chu apparently felt satisfied that he had offset the danger of the phrase being misunderstood from the perspective of the Hu-nan conception of the mind.

Surveying points where the two scholars were willing and not so willing to follow one another, we may conclude that it is unfair to characterize Chang

⁴⁰ Li, *Chu-tzu yü-lei* 27, pp. 689–90; 37, p. 985; and 20, p. 467; Ch'ien, *Chu-tzu*, Volume 1, pp. 357–8, 362–3; and Volume 2, p. 56.

⁴¹ Chu, *Hui-an hsien-sheng Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 47, p. 26b; Liu Shu-hsien, "Chu-tzu sheng-ch'a," p. 180; and his *Chu-tzu che-hsiieh ssu-hsiang te fa-chan yü wan-ch'eng* (Taipei, 1988), pp. 145, 189–90.

Shih as always capitulating to Chu Hsi. Yet Chu generally did triumph. For example, by not objecting to Chu's depiction of Hu-nan ideas as inherited from Hsieh Liang-tso, Chang failed to establish his own roots as being within Ch'eng Hao's philosophical tradition. Chang's failure to make distinctions between the Ch'eng brothers, as well as Chu's skill in utilizing one brother to supplement – and modify – the ideas of the other one, however, demonstrate that *Tao-hsiieh* in the twelfth century was actually quite broad and fluid. Chu's omission of important materials when editing Chang's collected works, along with his alteration of Hu Hung's *Understanding of words* (*Chih-yen*), cannot but disturb our sense of historical honesty in dealing with texts. Rather than judging Chu Hsi by our standards of textual integrity, it might be more illuminating to ask why he excised material from historical texts. When Chu decided not to preserve such materials, he was taking steps to eliminate some of the troubling diversity of the tradition and leave a much more definite legacy. He was apparently driven neither by a mean desire to deny the contributions of his friend nor by a higher concern for some objective standard of textual integrity. To Chu, the ultimate issue was the transmission of the *Tao*, and he considered his ideas and his actions most appropriate for that transmission.

Issues between Lü Tsu-ch'ien and Chu Hsi

Whereas Chang Shih had been the most popular teacher during the mid-1160s, Lü Tsu-ch'ien became by the end of the 1160s the most sought-after teacher and leader within the *Tao-hsiieh* fellowship.⁴² Besides the *chin-shih* degree, he had also passed the *po-hsiieh hung-tz'u* ("erudite literatus") examination on vast erudition and grand composition. Becoming a professor at the Imperial University (*T'ai-hsiieh*) in 1169, Lü instituted the study and school rules that he had earlier developed in his private teaching. In the 1172 national examinations, he passed the largest class of notable *Tao-hsiieh* scholars during the Sung. During the mid-1170s, he won further promotion and acclaim with his imperially commissioned anthology of Northern Sung literature and history of the late Northern Sung. Three hundred literati at one time in the late 1170s were attending his Li-tse Shu-yüan (Beautiful Pools Academy) in Chin-hua county in Wu-chou, Liang-che-tung. Chu attracted much smaller

⁴² Nien-p'u biography in *Tung-lai Lü T'ai-shih wen-chi* (Hsü Chin-hua t'sung-shu ed.), Volume 9; SS 434, pp. 12872–4; Franke, *Sung biographies*, pp. 744–7; P'an Fu-en and Hsü Yü-ch'ing, *Lü Tsu-ch'ien p'ing-chuan* (Nanking, 1992); P'an Fu-en and Hsü Yü-ch'ing, *Lü Tsu-ch'ien ssu-hsiang ch'u-t'an* (Hang-chou, 1984); P'an Fu-en, *P'an Fu-en tzu-hsüan-chi* (Chungking, 1999), pp. 133–219, 465–517; Liu Chao-jen, *Lü Tung-lai wen-hsiieh yü shih-hsiieh* (Taipei, 1986); Chi Hsiao-pin, "Inward-oriented ethical tension in Lü Tsu-ch'ien's thought" (MA thesis, Arizona State University, 1991); Li Tsung-han, "Lü Tsu-ch'ien chih li-shih ssu-hsiang" (MA thesis, Tsing-hua University, 1998) and Chan, *Chu Hsi: New studies*, pp. 424–31.

audiences as long as his younger contemporary taught in Chin-hua; only after Lü's death did Chu draw large numbers. Students found Lü's practical and thought-provoking pedagogy attractive, but they also came because of who he was.

Lü Tsu-ch'ien was a gifted member from what his contemporaries regarded as the leading scholar-official family of the Sung. Three of his ancestors had even served in the post of chief councilor for four Northern Sung emperors. No family had a more distinguished record of service to the dynasty during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Because of intellectual achievements, at least twenty-two of its members from seven generations during the Sung were included in the *Sung Yüan hsüeh-an* (*Records of Sung and Yüan Confucians*); moreover, three were given individual chapters. As one of the editors of that history noted, Lü Tsu-ch'ien synthesized his family tradition and various *Tao-hsüeh* strands to develop the most comprehensive of the major schools within twelfth-century *Tao-hsüeh*:

During the 1165-90 period, scholarly circles divided into three: the Chu school, the Lü school and the Lu school. The three schools were all active around the same time, but they were not very compatible. The learning of Chu Hsi stressed the investigation of things and the extension of knowledge. The learning of Lu Chiu-yüan sought to clarify and apprehend the original mind. The learning of Lü Tsu-ch'ien combined both of their strengths and embellished them with the tradition of the Central Plains literary and historical corpus. Although their points of entry and paths differed, they were basically alike in returning to the sages.⁴³

This literary and historical corpus was the unsurpassed family library which the Lües had managed to save after the fall of the Northern Sung. Anchored in this library, Lü's erudition was unusually liberal and broad. Furthermore, Lü's library and academy laid the foundation for a tradition of scholarship that flourished for centuries in Chin-hua.

Considering Lü's social prestige and political status, Chu Hsi asked his friend to take over his eldest son's education and ethical training. Chu also had confidence in Lü's intellectual and spiritual cultivation, and hoped that Lü might nurture a change in the son's extreme laziness and inability to grasp ethical principles. From 1173 to 1180, Lü supervised the young man's education and arranged an advantageous marriage, yet he never passed even the local examinations. Mutual concern over Chu's son's welfare was only one of the personal topics discussed in visits and correspondence between Chu Hsi and Lü. They wrote more often to each other than to anyone else. Lü was certainly Chu's closest friend during the second period and his most effective connection to other scholars.

⁴³ SYHA 51, p. 1653, most trans. from Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism*, p. 62.

War against the Chin

No national issue was more pressing than policy toward the Jurchen conquerors, whose Chin dynasty held sway over North China. Most *Tao-hsiieh* Confucians simply clamored for war and condemned all efforts to make peace with the Jurchen invaders. Nonetheless, Lü Tsu-ch'ien's great-grandfather, Lü Hao-wen, had played an exceptional role in events. Briefly serving as minister of war (*ping-pu shang-shu*), it was his duty to accompany the Sung emperor to the Jurchen's camp to surrender. The Jurchen sent Lü back to K'ai-feng to assist their puppet ruler. Lü, however, persuaded the puppet to relinquish the throne in favor of the only son of the Sung house who was not held captive. When Kao-tsung restored the Sung dynasty in the south, he appointed Lü Hao-wen as chief councilor. Because Lü's brief service in the puppet regime left him open to criticism, he had to step down to a lesser post. Lü Hao-wen's son, Pen-chung, later lost office when he opposed Ch'in Kuei's peace policy. Although Lü Pen-chung advocated recovery of the North, he was also more of a pragmatist than many *Tao-hsiieh* men. Advising Kao-tsung against precipitate military action, Lü gave highest priority to consolidating Sung power and defenses in the south.

Lü Tsu-ch'ien inherited his family's penchant for consolidating power in the south through reforms and mounting military campaigns only after careful preparation. Throughout his career, Lü Tsu-ch'ien consistently followed a moderate, pragmatic course midway between the peace party and the war hawks of the day.

Chu Hsi's proposals revealed much greater change over time. His memorials (*tso-u-i*) in the 1160s pleaded for offensive military action and categorically condemned all talk of peace. As he entered middle age, he became more mindful of the greater military prowess of the Jurchen Chin. Gradually, the hawkish penchant of his youth gave way to a pragmatic position like Lü's. Although he never lost his commitment to the ultimate goal of restoration, he eventually became more critical of the hawks than he was of the doves. During his last years, he talked in terms of ten to thirty years of preparation before mounting an attack on the north. Chu capsulized the more defensive and self-strengthening posture of his mature years:

The discussions at court now are either peace or war. But the ancients had a way of simultaneously being firm and maintaining a defense, a way that was neither waging war nor making peace. If we strengthen ourselves and set our own house in order, how can the enemy encroach upon us?⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Li, *Chu-tzu yü-lei* 133, p. 3200, trans. from Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism*, pp. 179–80, and discussion on pp. 169–80.

By his sixties, he had probably become more defensive and cautious than Lü had ever been. Still, Lü's views in this case had apparently affected Chu's thinking.

Academies

Chu Hsi and Lü Tsu-ch'ien also shared an extraordinary interest in academies (not only *shu-yüan* but also *ching-she* or "study lodges"). While in mourning for his mother in 1166, Lü Tsu-ch'ien established a study near her tomb and received students there. In 1170 Chu Hsi did the same. Following the success of Lü's Beautiful Pools Academy (Li-tse Shu-yüan) in Chin-hua, Chu worked to re-establish the Pai-lu-tung Shu-yüan (White Deer Grotto Academy) when he assumed his duties as prefect of Nan-k'ang commandery, Chiang-nan-tung, in 1179.⁴⁵ Chu discussed numerous points about the project with Lü and obtained crucial support for the academy from Lü's friends in Nan-k'ang and in the capital. To celebrate the opening of the academy, Chu asked Lü to write the academy's historical record and had it inscribed in stone there. Acquiring government resources for the White Deer Grotto Academy, Chu established a model for many later academies; however, a diversity of influences, particularly the intertwining of Lü's and Chu's legacies, persisted at least through the thirteenth century.⁴⁶

With regard to guidelines for students at the academy, Chu Hsi set an even more important precedent for future academies. Government schools followed detailed regulations, but Chu encouraged students to take more personal responsibility for their own behavior and self-cultivation. Academy students would generally have already experienced the discipline of government schools and/or private tutors; thus he could reasonably expect them to be mature and responsible. Those who failed to assume this responsibility would, he warned, have to face conventional regulations. Chu's stated principles, often called the academy's articles of learning, were designed to provide an alternative not only to the detailed regulations of the government schools, but also to the regimen observed in Buddhist monasteries. Despite his antagonism toward Buddhism, Chu resembled many other Confucian intellectuals in his admiration for the disciplined life of Ch'an monks.

⁴⁵ Studies in English on Chu's academy include John W. Chaffee, "Chu Hsi and the revival of the White Deer Grotto Academy, 1179-81," *T'oung-pao* 71 (1985), pp. 40-62; John W. Chaffee, "Chu Hsi in Nan-k'ang: *Tao-hsüeh* and the politics of education," in *Neo-Confucian education: The formative stage*, ed. William Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee (Berkeley, 1989), pp. 414-31; and Thomas H. C. Lee (Li Hung-ch'ü), "Chu Hsi, academies and the tradition of private *chiang-hsüeh*," *Han-hsüeh yen-chiu* 2 No. 1 (June 1984), pp. 301-29. See also Li Ts'ai-tung, *Pai-lu Shu-yüan shih-lüeh* (Peking, 1989).

⁴⁶ Linda A. Walton, *Academies and society in Southern Sung China* (Honolulu, 1999), pp. 59-70. See also Teng Hung-po, *Chung-kuo shu-yüan shih* (Shanghai, 2004).

Chu Hsi's articles of learning succinctly summarized standard Confucian ethics. The principles were capsulized in succinct quotations, and all except one were from the Classics. The foundation for learning was the virtues of the five cardinal human relationships: the affection between father and son, the rightness between ruler and minister, attention to separate functions between husband and wife, proper order between elder and younger, and faithfulness between friends. Grounded in these virtues, one could proceed to study, to practice what one learned in self-cultivation, and to handle affairs.⁴⁷

More than a dozen years earlier, Lü Tsu-ch'ien had drawn up similar academy rules. As Chu would later do, Lü emphasized, first, cultivating Confucian virtues through living in accordance with Confucian relationships, and second, developing a sense of community within the fellowship. For example, Lü's 1168 version of his academy rules set as the basic requirement: "Anyone is prohibited from entering this school who disobeys his parents, is unfriendly towards his brothers, is not at peace with his clan, is insincere and unfaithful to friends, does not act in accordance with his words, or conceals his faults."⁴⁸ Any pupil who transgressed one of the above precepts was first to be cautioned by his fellow students. In cases where personal admonitions proved ineffective, students were to discuss the individual's faults in a forum at the academy. Intractable offenders would be expelled from the academy. In short, as in Chu's later guidelines, Lü urged students to work together to encourage mutual progress in learning and self-cultivation.

A central aim of both teachers was to direct students toward personal cultivation of cardinal Confucian virtues. So central was this goal that it might appear that they had reduced the whole tradition of Confucian learning to ethical practice of family-oriented virtues. Even though spiritual cultivation was at the core of their agenda, any reductionist characterization would ignore or belittle the scope of their teaching curricula and personal scholarship.

Lü's guidelines had set forth, much more specifically than did Chu's, what students were actually to do in daily ethical praxis. Lü stipulated proper decorum both among students and between students and those outside the academy. In his rules for class preparation and discussions, Lü had students take notes both in class and on questions that occurred to them while reading. Using these notebooks as the basis for group discussions, students had to sign one another's notebooks to certify which questions had been addressed

⁴⁷ Chu, *Hui-an hsien-sheng Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 74, pp. 16b–17a, trans. from Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh), "Chu Hsi and the academies," in *Neo-Confucian education: The formative stage*, ed. William Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee (Berkeley, 1989), p. 397.

⁴⁸ Lü Tsu-ch'ien, *Lü Tung-lai hsien-sheng wen-chi* (*Kuo-hsiieh chi-pen ts'ung-shu* ed.) 10, pp. 247–9, especially p. 247. See also Yao Jung-sung, "Lü Tsu-ch'ien," in Wang Shou-nan, comp., *Chung-kuo li-tai ssu-hsiang-chia*, Volume 29 (Taipei, 1978), pp. 41–4.

in group sessions. A major purpose of the rules was to build a community within the academy. Developing a sense of the group was so crucial that students were prohibited from "being intimate with people not in the same *Tao*."

Comparatively, Chu's articles proclaimed the basic principles of learning, whereas Lü's detailed rules for behavior. Although Chu addressed the practice of filial piety (*hsiao-hsing*), he focused more on theory, but Lü on practice. Lü organized his rules carefully, beginning with a general principle and ending with specific regulations. Still, Chu formulated an even more meticulous systemization, starting with the fundamental virtues for spiritual cultivation, and concluding with three elaborations on what was most essential in studying. A further advantage of Chu's articles was that they were almost all succinct and well-known quotations from the Classics. Both men sought to nurture a fellowship among students learning Confucian truths through studying the Classics and cultivating the virtues basic to human relationships. Therefore the forging of a Confucian fellowship was one of their shared goals. Even though Chu's articles became famous and were adopted by other academies, similarities with Lü's earlier principles suggest that Lü had a role in Chu's contribution.

Reconstructing the *Tao-hsüeh* tradition

In their efforts to strengthen the *Tao-hsüeh* tradition, both Chu Hsi and Lü Tsu-ch'ien synthesized ideas from various Northern Sung Confucians. Although Lü incorporated a broad range of thinkers, he focused particularly upon the Ch'eng brothers and Chang Tsai. Chu Hsi's own thinking drew most heavily upon these same three Northern Sung masters. Lü and Chu also took note of Chou Tun-i's unique role in reviving the transmission of the *Tao* and teaching Ch'eng Hao. On this point, they were following Hu Hung and Chang Shih's view of Chou's singular contribution. Even though they agreed with the Hu-nan school that Chou had a special status, both Chu and Lü credited the Ch'eng brothers with having far surpassed Chou in actually developing the tradition. In a point of disagreement with Chu, Lü questioned Chou's rather abstruse work *T'ai-chi t'u shuo* (*Explanation of the diagram of the Supreme Ultimate*). Lü's standpoint was apparently a widespread one during the twelfth century; the *Writings by various Confucians for propagating the Tao* (*Chu ju ming-tao chi*) had also placed Chou first, but had not included his *Explanation of the diagram of the Supreme Ultimate*. Lu Chiu-yüan (as will be discussed below in the section on the Ultimate) much more forcefully challenged Chu's claim that Chou's *Explanation of the diagram* was Confucian, rather than Taoist, in origin. Professor Teng Kuang-ming (1907–98) has presented historical evidence

that Chou was not very influential until he was promoted by Chu Hsi.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Chou Tun-i's pioneering role was not in question between Chu and Lü, but his notion of the Ultimate of Nonbeing (*wu-chi*) was.

The major difference in Chu's presentation was the degree to which he institutionalized the idea that Chou had opened the way to the Ch'eng brothers' revival of the transmission of the *Tao*. By emphasizing that Chou served as a philosophical foundation for the Chengs, Chu established the centrality of the Ch'eng brothers' concept of principle. After qualifying that concept with Chou's controversial and speculative notion of the Supreme Ultimate, Chu could then supplement it with additional insights from Chang Tsai and Shao Yung (1011–77).⁵⁰ Although largely correct, this philosophical characterization of Chu's system needs to be adjusted to reflect the historical and textual realities of the era.

A quite different gestalt of early *Tao-hsiieh* had already been presented in *Writings by various Confucians for propagating the Tao*. In that anthology compiled by Chang Chiu-ch'eng's students in the 1160s, Ssu-ma Kuang and Chang Tsai were interjected between Chou and the Ch'engs. A more diverse beginning implied less concentration – than in Chu's system – on the Ch'engs as the foundation of the tradition. This earlier anthology also portrayed such diversity of thought as continuing within the tradition into succeeding generations. As an indication of how inclusive this anthology's net was, writings of certain individuals have been preserved nowhere else: works by Liu An-shih (1048–1125), Chiang Kung-wang (fl. 1101), Liu Tzu-hui (1101–47), as well as the most complete edition of the writings of P'an Chih (early twelfth century). Liu An-shih was Ssu-ma Kuang's major disciple. P'an and Liu Tzu-hui were particularly receptive to a synthesis with Buddhist ideas. Chiang and P'an also shared Chang Chiu-ch'eng's disinclination for speculative philosophy. (The major person omitted from this anthology was Hu Hung, but it was his own intense hostility toward dialogue with Buddhists that probably led to his exclusion.) By ending with Chang's work, the compilers were suggesting that Chang Chiu-ch'eng represented the completion of the tradition in the 1160s. It was probably against this anthology that Chu Hsi was fighting in his two anthologies of the 1170s.

⁴⁹ Teng Kuang-ming, "Kuan-yü Chou Tun-i te shih-ch'eng chuan-shou," in his *Teng Kuang-ming hsiieh-shu lun-chu tzu-hsüan-chi* (Peking, 1994), pp. 289–313.

⁵⁰ For a philosophical overview, see Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh), "Chu Hsi's completion of neo-Confucianism," in *Études Song: Sung studies in memoriam Étienne Balazs*, ed. Françoise Aubin (Paris, 1973), pp. 73–81; and his *Chu Hsi: New studies*, pp. 320–35. In *Genealogy of the Way: The construction and uses of the Confucian tradition in late imperial China* (Stanford, 1995), chapter 5, Thomas A. Wilson uses the hermeneutical concept of filiative genealogy to question Chan's philosophical interpretation of the succession of the *Tao*.

Compiling in 1173 the *I-Lo yüan-yüan lu* (*Records of the evolution of the I-Lo school of the two Ch'engs*), Chu Hsi focused on the Ch'eng brothers and their immediate associates and disciples. Having collected statements in which various individuals had praised others included in the *Records*, he effectively enhanced the sense of a particular tradition of Confucians. Using the *I-Lo* label to identify the tradition specifically with the geographical base and school of the Ch'engs, he also augmented the centrality of the Ch'engs. Incorporating four prestigious Confucians, who associated themselves with the Ch'engs, and thirty-four others, who could be presented as disciples of the Ch'engs, Chu demonstrated the beginnings of a fellowship that continued from the late eleventh century for over half a century through several generations. Excluding Chang Chiu-ch'eng enabled Chu to provide a clear alternative to the tradition as defined in the *Writings by various Confucians for propagating the Tao*. Nevertheless, Chu was far more inclusive in the *Records* than he and his disciples were inclined to be in most of their later reconstructions. For example, besides including Shao Yung in the *Records*, he was especially generous to Hu An-kuo and Lü Hsi-che (1036–1114) – ancestors of Hu Hung and Lü Tsu-ch'ien. Thus he was being solicitous of Hu-nan and Chekiang branches of the *Tao-hsüeh* of his day.

Consulting with Lü Tsu-ch'ien between 1175 and 1178, Chu Hsi compiled the *Chin-ssu lu* (*Reflections on things at hand*).⁵¹ Compared with Chu's work in 1173, this anthology included only the principal Four Masters, but in the same order: Chou Tun-i, the Ch'eng brothers, and Chang Tsai. Even though Chu elsewhere cited Shao's comments on cosmology and the natural world, Chu generally excluded him from the mainline of the tradition because of his fatalism and his inadequate attention to spiritual cultivation and ethics.⁵² Chu's concentration primarily on the Ch'engs, secondarily on Chang, and lastly on Chou is conclusively shown in the number of passages from each of the Four Masters. Of the total 622 passages, the Ch'engs contributed 80 percent and Chang almost 18 percent. Chou's twelve passages amounted to less than 2 percent of the whole; moreover, only one passage came from his more controversial *Explanation of the diagram of the Supreme Ultimate*. In brief, judging from these figures, the special role accorded to Chou should be balanced by consideration

⁵¹ Chu Hsi and Lü Tsu-ch'ien, eds., *Chin-ssu lu* (Taipei, 1968), trans. by Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh), *Reflections on things at hand: The Neo-Confucian anthology compiled by Chu Hsi and Lü Tsu-ch'ien* (New York, 1967). See also Chan, *Chu Hsi: New studies*, pp. 356–73.

⁵² Don J. Wyatt, "Chu Hsi's critique of Shao Yung: One instance of the stand against fatalism," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 55 No. 2 (December 1985), pp. 649–66; and his *The recluse of Loyang: Shao Yung and the moral evolution of early Sung thought* (Honolulu, 1996); but also see Anne D. Birdwhistell, *Transition to neo-Confucianism: Shao Yung on knowledge and symbols of reality* (Stanford, 1989), pp. 211–15; and Hon Tze-ki, *The Yijing and Chinese politics: Classical commentary and literati activism in the Northern Song period, 960–1127* (Albany, 2005).

of the very small percentage of passages and limited number of concepts that Chu actually borrowed from him.

Although Chu Hsi's followers have generally given him exclusive credit for the anthology, Lü Tsu-ch'ien's opinions helped determine the content of the work. The most significant of Lü's contributions were persuading Chu to begin the book with a chapter on nonempirical philosophical concepts, omitting Ch'eng Hao's treatise on humaneness, and including quotations from Ch'eng I's *I chuan* (*Commentary to the Book of changes*). Because Chu had misgivings about Ch'eng I's approach to the *Book of changes*, he did not want to incorporate any passages from it. Nevertheless, in the end, he included 106 passages from that work, or about 17 percent of the total number of passages in Chu and Lü's anthology. This was much more than from any other source except Chu's edition of the *Erb-Ch'eng i-shu* (*Surviving works of the two Ch'engs*). The specific passages, which Lü had suggested, were useful explanations of the principles involved in daily self-cultivation; when Chu realized this fact, he yielded to Lü's inclusion of the passages from Ch'eng I's commentary.⁵³

Overall, Lü Tsu-ch'ien's intellectual diversity has given his thought a composite appearance for most modern scholars, who do not regard him as a *Tao-hsüeh* Confucian theoretician.⁵⁴ They generally portray Lü as focused on institutional and historical studies in contrast to Chu Hsi's study of ethical philosophy and the Classics. After Lü's death, Chu similarly criticized his friend for acquiring broad and diverse knowledge at the expense of holding on to the essentials. More specifically, Lü's flaw, according to Chu, was being "ingenious" (*ch'iao*), i.e. clever, artful, and opportune, in explaining difficult details in the histories and the Classics. Most of Chu's very critical statements about Lü were made some years after Lü's death when Chu confronted younger scholars, like Ch'en Liang (1143–94), who had been influenced by Lü's ideas. In contrast, Chu's eulogy more closely reveals his appreciation for Lü during his friend's lifetime.

Late in 1181, Chu Hsi's eulogy for Lü Tsu-ch'ien deplored the implications of Lü's and Chang Shih's deaths for "the decline of this *Tao* of ours" and "this *tang* of ours." Surprisingly, Chu used this term *tang* (faction), for it had extremely negative political and ethical connotations ever since Confucius' warning (in *Analects*, 15/22) against factions. The negative connotations had not been excised by Ou-yang Hsiu's (1007–72) famous memorial from the

⁵³ Li, *Chu-tzu yü-lei* 119, pp. 2874–5. On Lü's role, see Chan, *Reflections on things at hand*, pp. 324–5; and Ch'ien, *Chu-tzu*, Volume 3, pp. 156–7.

⁵⁴ A recent example is Chu Ping-tzu, "Tradition building and cultural competition in Southern Song China (1160–1220): The way, the learning, and the texts" (diss., Harvard University, 1998). A recent corrective to this conventional view is Professor Yü Ying-shih's *Chu Hsi te li-shih shih-chieh*, wherein he frequently quotes Lü – alongside Chu, Chang, and Lu – to make his case about *Tao-hsüeh* ideas and positions.

1040s in defense of forming a faction – if its members were superior men with good goals. Moreover, some of the twelfth-century opponents of *Tao-hsiieh* had already expressed concern that the group was functioning like a faction. Yet, despite the use of the politically charged term to designate the group, Chu's eulogy also made an eloquent statement about Lü as leader of the *Tao-hsiieh* group:

Heaven has severed this culture of ours, but why so cruelly? Ching-fu [courtesy name for Chang Shih] was already taken from us last year; why now has Po-kung [courtesy name for Lü Tsu-ch'ien] met this unseemly fate? Who will lead and restore order to *Tao-hsiieh*? Who will restore the virtue of rulers? Who will enlighten the younger generation? Who will bring fortune to this people? Who will finish the explication of the Classics? Who will continue the recording of historical events?⁵⁵

Cognizant that Lü's death had resulted in a leadership vacuum, Chu thus laid claim to the mantle for carrying out the group's agenda.

Rhetorically asking who would now lead *Tao-hsiieh*, Chu Hsi was suggesting that he would strive to take over for Lü Tsu-ch'ien. Without his two younger friends, Chu also claimed that no one remained who could even call him on his shortcomings. Although he did not here specify his own flaws, he had earlier acknowledged to his friends that he suffered from such tendencies as being "too anxious and intolerant."⁵⁶ Without the moderating influence of such peers as Chang and Lü, Chu Hsi's relations with other intellectuals within the fellowship and in the government would become markedly more tense during the last two decades of the century.

THE THIRD PERIOD, 1182–1202

Chu Hsi's widely read eulogy for Lü Tsu-ch'ien late in 1181 set the stage for heightened confrontations among intellectuals and between them and the government. Moreover, in January of 1182, he assumed a post with greater power than he had ever exercised. Taking charge of an ongoing crisis resulting from a drought in Lü's area of Chekiang, Chu traveled the circuit (*lu* or, for a short time, *tao*) to inspect conditions and to purge corrupt administrators. During his campaign against corruption, he impeached T'ang Chung-yu (1136–88) for malfeasance, counterfeiting currency, and various other alleged crimes. As a noted institutional scholar from an established family, T'ang had friends at court who sought to have the impeachment dismissed as nothing

⁵⁵ Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 87, pp. 12b, 13b; cf. trans., Chan, *Chu Hsi: New studies*, p. 431. See also Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi (pieb-chi)* 3, p. 12a.

⁵⁶ Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 31, p. 15b, in response to Chang, *Nan-hsiian wen-chi* 22, p. 9b; see also sample passages in Chan, *Chu Hsi: New studies*, pp. 397–8, 427.

more than a manifestation of friction between intellectuals. Responding to Chu's impeachment of T'ang and destruction of Ch'in Kuei's shrine, some scholar-officials defended the establishment against what they considered to be Chu's overly zealous attacks on intellectual and political opponents. They portrayed *Tao-hsiieh* Confucians as insincere, depraved hypocrites who claimed sole possession of the *Tao* only to disguise callous plotting for personal advancement in the bureaucracy. Although they did not explicitly cite Chu's eulogy to Lü, their warning that *Tao-hsiieh* was a faction did resonate with the eulogy, in which Chu called his group a faction and outlined its cultural and political agenda. As a compromise to defuse tensions, Hsiao-tsung ruled that although *Tao-hsiieh* was a good label, it could be used for villainous ends. The court also rescinded T'ang's appointment and accepted Chu's resignation.

Chu Hsi's year in Chekiang aroused his suspicions about and opposition to intellectuals there. Convinced that Ch'en Liang was fast becoming the center of Wu-chou intellectuals, Chu complained about the evolution from Lü's teachings to Ch'en's:

While Lü Tsu-ch'ien was in good health, he loved to talk about historical studies – talk that, after his death, became the muddled clamor of a younger generation of scholars. This gang of scoundrels with scurrilous tongues advocate despising kings and honoring hegemons (*pa*), contemplating advantage and calculating results – which grates on the ears even more!⁵⁷

Although Lü's students actually continued his teachings at the academy in Chin-hua, Chu chose to portray intellectual currents there in a far more ominous light. Accordingly, if not treading Ch'en's utilitarian path, Chekiang literati were following Lu Chiu-yüan's Ch'an proclivity for ignoring book-learning. Thus, Chu warned, "Unless we expend maximum effort struggling against and combating these [intellectuals], the *Tao* will have no way to become manifest."⁵⁸

Chu's young antagonists issued warnings of their own. Ch'en Liang complained to Chu in 1185 about the cliquishness of *Tao-hsiieh* Confucians: "Because their own eyes are only occasionally open, they believe they have a secret art of learning . . . They demarcate and establish boundaries between themselves and others like ties at the sacrificial altar of a secret society."⁵⁹ Lu Chiu-yüan also observed that if Chu's circle continued to restrict the meaning

⁵⁷ Chu Hsi, *Chu-tzu wen-chi* (Taipei, 2000) 35, p. 24b, trans. from Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism*, p. 183; for a comparison of Chu's and Lü's views of history, see T'ang Ch'in-fu, *Chu Hsi te shih-hsiieh ssu-hsiang* (Chi-nan, 2000), pp. 253–74.

⁵⁸ Quoted by Wang, *Chu-tzu nien-p'u* 3A, p. 134; trans. from Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism*, p. 58.

⁵⁹ Ch'en Liang, *Ch'en Liang chi*, ed. Teng Kuang-ming, 2 vols. (Peking, 1987) 20, p. 293, revised ed. 28, p. 352, trans. from Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism*, p. 183.

of the *Tao*, “those who use the expression *Tao-hsüeh* will be profoundly rejected and vigorously censured.”⁶⁰

Nevertheless, such warnings did not deter Chu Hsi from continuing to promote “*Tao-hsüeh*” as a positive appellation. Before 1178, he had labored to settle the composition of the beginnings of the *Tao-hsüeh* tradition and definitive texts for the Ch’eng brothers. After 1178, he focused more directly upon the Four Books and the *Book of changes*. In his commentaries, he increasingly became an independent critic of earlier *Tao-hsüeh* Confucians in an effort to establish a textual authority based upon the Classics for the *Tao-hsüeh* community. Although he had earlier coined the term *tao-t’ung* (succession to, or tradition of, the *Tao*), Chu Hsi began employing the new term fully in 1189, particularly in his prefaces to the *Doctrine of the mean* and the *Great learning*. With the new term, he was able to set forth with greater clarity *Tao-hsüeh* claims about the revival of the transmission of the *Tao*. By 1194, he was even more explicit about inheriting this classical authority, for he claimed to have personal contact with the “conveyance of the *Tao*.”⁶¹ In his ritual prayers at academies, he positioned himself as mediator between his students and the sages; moreover, he led his students in promising never to change anything that the sages had transmitted to him.⁶² The ten years from the mid-1180s to the mid-1190s were indeed the height of Chu’s most rigorous and exclusive reconstructions of the *Tao-hsüeh* tradition. Developing these various textual and cultural grounds for his assumption, after Lü’s death, to lead the *Tao-hsüeh* faction, Chu exacerbated tensions with conventional Confucians once again.

Another debate flared at court in 1188 over *Tao-hsüeh*. A senior official at the Ministry of War (*Ping-pu*), Lin Li (1142 *chin-shih*), renewed charges of cliquishness and pretentiousness: “Hsi fundamentally has no learning of his own. Instead, in an effort to promote himself irresponsibly, he hangs on to Chang Tsai and Ch’eng I, whom he takes as vaunted authorities, and calls this *Tao-hsüeh*.”⁶³ The one who defended Chu Hsi against this attack in 1188 was a leader of the utilitarian wing of Chekiang *Tao-hsüeh*. Yeh Shih reminded the

⁶⁰ Lu Chiu-yüan, *Lu Chiu-yüan chi*, ed. Chung Che (Peking, 1980) 35, p. 437.

⁶¹ Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 86, p. 12a-b; Chan Wing-tsit (Ch’ên Jung-chieh), *Chu Hsi: Life and thought* (Hong Kong and New York, 1987), pp. 67–8. Prefaces are in Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 76, pp. 19b–23a. On *tao-t’ung*, see William Theodore de Bary, *The message of the mind in Neo-Confucianism* (New York, 1989), pp. 28–32; Chan, *Chu Hsi: New studies*, pp. 320–35; Ts’ai Fang-lu, *Chung-hua tao-t’ung ssu-hsiang fa-chan shih* (Chengtu, 2003); and Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way*, pp. 88–93.

⁶² Hoyt Cleveland Tillman (T’ien Hao), “Zhu Xi’s prayers to the spirit of Confucius and claim to the transmission of the way,” *Philosophy East and West*, 54 No. 4 (October 2004), pp. 489–513. On his religious thinking, see Julia Ching (Ch’in Chia-i), *The religious thought of Chu Hsi* (Oxford, 2000).

⁶³ Li, *Tao ming lu* 6, p. 2a-b; cf. trans., Haeger, “The intellectual context of Neo-Confucian syncretism,” p. 506.

court that *Tao-hsiieh* as a rubric was much broader than Chu Hsi, for various reform-minded officials were associated with it.

Scholar-officials associated with *Tao-hsiieh* became increasingly involved in court politics and intrigues during the early 1190s. For a few months late in 1194, they enjoyed considerable influence at the court of Ning-tsung (r. 1194–1224), whom they had conspired, with Han T'o-chou (1152–1207), to place upon the dragon throne. For about forty-six days that autumn, Chu had his only appointment at court. Chu's moralistic lecturing about court favorites, like Han T'o-chou, and about the imperial family's violations of decorum wearied the emperor. Surely irritated by frequent chiding pronouncements by *Tao-hsiieh* scholar-officials during the early 1190s about decorum within the imperial family, the emperor readily endorsed Han's efforts to have them dismissed from office and then banned as a dangerous faction. Given *Tao-hsiieh* success in the examinations since 1172, the court now required all candidates to swear that they had no connection to the group.

An official blacklist named fifty-nine members of this faction. Four high ministers headed the list, but Chu was named before the remaining intellectuals. Seniority of age added to his stature as the most renowned scholar in the group. Men from diverse philosophical orientations were included. For instance, Chekiang utilitarians were the most numerous, but Lu Chiu-yüan's disciples were also prominent. Tracing the roots of those listed would lead back ultimately not only to the Ch'eng brothers but also to almost all of their associates – except the Su brothers (Su Shih and Su Ch'e) – in the Yüan-yü conservative party. All major *Tao-hsiieh* leaders, such as Lü Tsu-ch'ien and Lu Chiu-yüan, who were not on the blacklist had already died before the political crisis of 1194–5. The list shows that the diverse spectrum of *Tao-hsiieh* throughout the twelfth century had not escaped the notice of their enemies. These enemies complained about *Tao-hsiieh* Confucians' inherent claims to doctrinal orthodoxy and exclusionary grouping that could potentially alter policy and polity. As in the 1130s, there was a call for a return to the original teachings of Confucius and Mencius, as distinct from the distorted opinions of recent (Sung) scholars. The ban gradually lost momentum and was finally lifted early in 1202.⁶⁴

Even more than these political controversies, intellectual debates had a role in defining Confucianism during this third period. No debates during

⁶⁴ Yeh, *Ssu-ch'ao wen-chien lu* 4, pp. 143–152; and Li, *Tao ming lu* 7A, pp. 1a–23a, 7B, pp. 1a–27a. The most comprehensive and documented discussion of the politics of *Tao-hsiieh* is Yü Ying-shih's *Chu Hsi te li-shih shih-chieh*. Two particularly noteworthy articles in English on the prohibition are Schirokauer, "Neo-Confucian under attack"; and John W. Chaffee, "Chao Ju-yü, spurious learning, and Southern Sung political culture," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 22 (1990–2), pp. 23–61.

the last quarter of the century had as much impact as Chu's exchanges with Ch'en Liang and Lu Chiu-yüan.

Issues between Ch'en Liang and Chu Hsi

The Ch'ens of Wu-chou in central Chekiang had been more directly affected by the Jurchen conquest than most literati families in the South because the household head had given his life in battle against the invaders.⁶⁵ Soon thereafter, the Ch'ens lost most of their land, and the family struggled in vain to improve its status through the examinations. Such harsh realities helped to propel Ch'en Liang's thought toward the war and utilitarian themes for which he is famous. From his mid-twenties to mid-thirties, however, he passed through a *Tao-hsüeh* phase during which he made anti-utilitarian pronouncements. During this period, he blamed the failures of earlier rulers on their obsession with achieving results; moreover, he insisted upon using absolute ethical standards to judge their motives, rather than simply evaluating their actual deeds directly. One of his pieces from the early 1170s was so similar to Chu Hsi's that after Lü Tsu-ch'ien passed it along to Chu, it was until recently incorporated into Chu's collected works.⁶⁶ By 1178 Ch'en's continuing obsession with the Jurchen menace had made him impatient with *Tao-hsüeh* ethics and spiritual cultivation. Ch'en's evolution toward more radical conclusions was held in check by Lü's influence, however.

Within a year of Lü Tsu-ch'ien's death, Ch'en began writing and circulating essays that presented a radical challenge to *Tao-hsüeh*. Ch'en's thought now centered on three points: achieving practical and immediate ends by the most effective means, understanding the *Tao* in terms of what was appropriate to meet the needs of the time and of circumstance, and also maximizing benefits for both individual households and the whole country. Ch'en Liang wrote ten of these essays in 1182 and sent copies to Chu Hsi, whom he had met earlier that year.

Upon assuming office in Chekiang in 1182, Chu Hsi had called upon Ch'en Liang and together they mourned at Lü Tsu-ch'ien's grave. Chu was displeased with Ch'en's eulogy to Lü because of its lament about how

⁶⁵ On Ch'en Liang, see SS 436, pp. 12929-45; Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism*, *passim*; Hoyt Cleveland Tillman (T'ien Hao), *Ch'en Liang on public interest and the law* (Honolulu, 1994); and its Chinese version, "Ch'en Liang lun kung yü fa," in *Sung-tai ssu-hsiang-shih lun*, ed. T'ien Hao (Peking, 2003), pp. 518-76; Tung P'ing and Liu Hung-chang, *Ch'en Liang p'ing-chuan* (Nanking, 1996); Fang Ju-chin, *Ch'en Liang yü Nan-Sung Che-tung hsüeh-p'ai yen-chiu* (Peking, 1996); and Cheng Chi-hsiung, "Ch'en Liang te shih-kung chih hsüeh," *Taiwan ta-hsüeh chung-wen hsüeh-pao* 6 (June 1994), pp. 257-89. Special note should be made of the six essays on Ch'en in Teng, *Teng Kuang-ming hsüeh-shu lun-chu tzu-hsüan chi*, pp. 505-602.

⁶⁶ The essay is "San-hsien-sheng lun-shih lu hsü"; although earlier noted by scholars of Ch'en Liang, the error was finally corrected by Ch'en Chün-min in Chu, *Chu-tzu wen-chi* 76, p. 3846.

recent heroes had been slighted. Still, Chu needed the advice and support of local literati in his fight against corruption and in his efforts to relieve food shortages resulting from drought conditions. So identified with Chu's administration and indictment of T'ang Chung-yu did Ch'en become during 1182 that after Chu resigned and departed, Ch'en was persecuted by some members of the local elite for attaching himself to *Tao-hsiieh* officials. When Ch'en complained about this and later cases when he was incarcerated and/or beaten, Chu seized the opportunity to reprimand him for his behavior and ideas. Although Ch'en conceded that his non-conformist bent placed himself in peril, he denied that his legal difficulties simply arose from his ideas.

Chu Hsi further admonished him to forsake utilitarian ideas and to become a *ch'un ju* (pure Confucian). Rejecting this attempt to constrict the parameters of Confucian teachings, Ch'en retorted that Confucius had commented only once about being "a gentlemanly Confucian" (*Analects*, 6/11). Some misguided Confucians had seized upon this single passage to justify a narrow Confucian school centered on humaneness to the neglect of such practical matters as talent and bravery. But Confucius himself (*Analects*, 14/13) had spoken in terms of the model of the "complete person." Why neglect the practical component of Confucius' teachings by diverting attention solely to a doctrinaire criterion of being Confucian? Ch'en thus saw himself as within the legacy of Confucius' practical teachings. To Chu, however, Ch'en had the same flaw as Han and T'ang scholars who "were unwilling to humble their minds and to dedicate themselves to the discipline of being a [pure] Confucian and following the learning of the sages."⁶⁷

On governance

In return for Ch'en Liang's ten essays of 1182, Chu Hsi sent his own essay on the land question to Ch'en for comment. Chu had simply "cut and pasted" three long quotations together from official histories written about a thousand years earlier.⁶⁸ The histories portrayed an ancient utopia with a well-field system as it was assumed to have existed about a thousand years before these

⁶⁷ Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 36, p. 24a. On their relationship, see Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism*, chapter 3.

⁶⁸ Conventionally, only some sections are identified as quotations. Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 68, pp. 27a-9b; Hsün Yüeh, ed., *Han chi* (*Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'ang* ed.) 8, pp. 3-4, and Pan Ku et al., eds., *Han shu* (Peking, 1962) 23, pp. 1079, 1081-2, and 24A, pp. 1119-23. Mencius (3A/3 and 5B/2) began the myth, which was used by centuries of reforms; see Joseph R. Levenson, "Ill wind in the well-field," in *The Confucian persuasion*, ed. Arthur F. Wright (Stanford, 1960), pp. 268-87. Modern scholars emphasize passages where Chu criticized the utopians, for example Hsiao Kung-ch'üan, *Chung-kuo cheng-chih ssu-hsiang shih*, Volume 4 (Taipei, 1968), pp. 502-4; and Ch'ien, *Chu-tzu*, Volume 1, p. 198. For Ch'en's critique, see his *Ch'en Liang chi* 20, pp. 273-4, 277, revised ed. 28, pp. 332-3, 338.

historical accounts were composed. Although part of an integrated system with a clearly defined social hierarchy, the well-field model was based upon the economic production of peasant households with approximately equal land allotments (*chiün-t'ien*). Chu elsewhere criticized such *Tao-hsüeh* Confucians as Hu Hung for espousing this impractical, antique scheme. Here, implicitly approving of the ancient utopia, he clearly presented it as embodying the thrust of his own solution to the perplexing Sung problem of gross inequalities in landownership. Apparently, his later criticism of this utopian model incorporated points from Ch'en's sharp response. For example, reminding Chu that the clock could not be turned back to antiquity, Ch'en pointed out that Sung society had complex institutions; furthermore, institutions from different periods could not be mixed together in such an arbitrary fashion.

The two men also differed on how to meet food shortages resulting from the drought in central Chekiang. Using the power of his office, Chu exercised suasion, even pressure, on local elites to contribute grain; moreover, he advocated community granaries to protect peasants from extreme price fluctuations. Advising Chu that the granaries of the wealthy were already exhausted, Ch'en sought to turn Chu's attention to acquiring aid from the central government. Ch'en even claimed that he did not participate in community and charity institutions.⁶⁹ Although Ch'en's frankness and callousness here are striking, his attitude was comparable to the family-oriented perspective of his contemporary, Yüan Ts'ai (1140–95). In the *Yüan-shih shih-fan* (*Precepts for social life*), Yüan warned against entanglement in welfare activities, community organizations and social relations beyond the family.⁷⁰ Even though he did not articulate family interests in as much detail as did Yüan, Ch'en clearly had similar priorities regarding family wealth. Given the relatively limited economic resources of Ch'en's hinterland area and its dependence on trade with major macroeconomic regions along the lower Yangtze (Chiang-nan and Liang-che circuits) and the southeastern seacoast, it was perhaps natural for Ch'en to look to the central government for solutions. In other writings, although he warned of the ills of over-centralization, he also praised governmental granary programs and welcomed central government initiatives. Attentive to both family and national interests, Ch'en was not very receptive to Chu's emphasis on community institutions on a middle level between family and government.

In terms of relative focus on local or national issues, Ch'en's priorities were closer – than Chu's were – to those of Lü Tsu-ch'ien and leading thinkers

⁶⁹ See the discussion in Tillman, *Public interest*, pp. 54–65 *passim*.

⁷⁰ Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Family and property in Sung China: Yüan Ts'ai's precepts for social life* (Princeton, 1984), especially pp. 153–4, 272–4.

of the eleventh century. Nevertheless, policy positions on many issues were similar and thus less of a factor in divisions between major thinkers than had been the case a century earlier. Still, Ch'en's and Chu's reasons for supporting similar policies, such as restoration of Sung rule in North China, diverged widely and reflected their philosophical approaches and values.⁷¹ Overall, although Ch'en was much more critical of the examination system than was Chu, Chu was on most issues far more idealistic and radical than Ch'en or other contemporaries. Based upon a conception of human nature as physical instead of ethical or metaphysical, Ch'en simply called for behavior and institutions that were normatively appropriate and fair in balancing private and public interests.⁷² Chu's notion of metaphysical principles provided intellectual grounds for greater optimism about fundamentally transforming people and society to achieve ideal standards.

On expediency and utility

Confucians generally recognized that there were times and situations in which the standard (*ching*) principle did not provide a clear guide to action, so situational weighing or expediency (*ch'üan*) was required. During the Han, scholars defined *ch'üan* thus: "That which is at variance with the standard yet complies with the *Tao* is the expedient." Ch'eng I rejected this traditional distinction because it allowed too much variant behavior. Equating the expedient and the standard, he defined the expedient as the application of the standard to time and situation. Chu Hsi, in his 1178 commentary on the *Analects*, followed Ch'eng I's interpretation. Nevertheless, a number of Chu's comments to students during the 1180s and 1190s expressed his preference for the Han view over Ch'eng I's.⁷³ Given the timing and content of his exchange with Ch'en Liang, Ch'en's challenge appears to have been a catalyst in changing Chu's mind.

During Ch'en's 1183 visit, Chu Hsi had asked him: "Integrity [*i*, what is right] then to you has the meaning of according with the time or situation?" Ch'en had reportedly answered, "Definitely."⁷⁴ Thus Ch'en had not

⁷¹ See discussion in Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism*, pp. 169–80.

⁷² Tillman, *Public interest*, pp. 16–23.

⁷³ See Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism*, chapter 4; Wei Chung-t'ung, "Chu Hsi on the standard and the expedient," in *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Chan Wing-tsit (Honolulu, 1986), pp. 255–71; and Ch'en T'ing-hsiang, *Sung-tai li-hsüeh-chia te i-li kuan* (Peking, 1999).

⁷⁴ Li, *Chu-tzu yü-lei* 137, pp. 3269–70. Citing Chu's comment that expediency "must by necessity comply with righteousness," Wei's "Standard and expedient," p. 260, presents Chu himself as making righteousness (i.e. integrity) flexible; however, given the context of Chu's debate with Ch'en, it seems certain that Chu did not intend to make integrity flexible.

recoiled from equating integrity and situational weighing. Ch'en's identification of integrity with being in accord with time and circumstance was nearly congruent with Ch'eng I's likening of expediency to the application of the standard to time and place. Chu could hardly have missed such an obvious similarity, but it would have been very awkward for him to have drawn this parallel. Ch'en had, however, developed Ch'eng's point toward a more radical conclusion that alarmed Chu. According to Chu, Ch'en rendered integrity itself flexible: "integrity became the manner in which expediency was used."

Ch'en Liang's 1182 essays had apparently served as the catalyst on this issue, for Chu charged that much in the essays ran counter to standard principles. Informing Ch'en that such essays would not be shown to his own students, Chu warned of irremediable damage if young scholars read the essays. According to Chu's estimation, the essays would surely confuse them about the standard principles of the Three Bonds and Five Relationships.

Writing to Ch'en, Chu urged him to forsake his concept of "seeking both integrity and utility and using the methods of the king and the hegemon together."⁷⁵ Hsün-tzu had similarly condemned hegemonies for opportune or impure approaches that were not true to the Confucian standard. Chu Hsi further dismissed Han Hsüan-ti's (91-49 BC, r. 74-49) approval of the Han government's use of kingship and hegemony in a mixed fashion. Associating both hegemonies of late antiquity and rulers of recent dynasties together as practitioners of heretical theory and praxis, Chu claimed that expediency secured no more than temporary success without the lasting substance of standard virtue.

Rejecting Chu's characterization of his position, Ch'en pointed out what he regarded as the roots of Chu's misunderstanding. Mencius and Hsün-tzu had led Han and T'ang scholars to make arbitrary distinctions between integrity and utility, kingship and hegemony. The Ch'eng brothers had polarized these concepts even further by positing a gulf between Heaven's principle and human passions and also by denigrating the Han and T'ang in comparison to the golden age of the Three Dynasties (*san-tai*) in antiquity. Reducing Han and T'ang reigns to nothing more than cleverness and force, Chu had characterized even the glorious reigns of recent dynasties as having maintained peace and order only by accidental coincidence with principle. Ch'en cried out that it was grossly unfair for Chu to portray even the most successful Han and T'ang rulers as if they lived in a house of patchwork expediency, struggling to support one part of the house while allowing another part to collapse.

Seeking to overcome Chu's polarizing of these concepts and symbols, Ch'en argued that the *Tao* of the great rulers of these dynasties was certainly kingship; thus their actions pointed to the fundamental unity of integrity and utility.

⁷⁵ Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 36, p. 19a.

With this holistic approach, Ch'en wanted to show the ethical character of Han and T'ang accomplishments.

According to Ch'en, such revisionism to transform historical reigns into models had a precedent in Confucius' cleansing of the historical record while editing the Classics. The Three Dynasties of high antiquity appeared utopian and superior to later reigns only due to this bowdlerization of the historical record. Confucius had a noble purpose for rewriting history: he was defending the value of government and rites from the skepticism aroused by the Taoists. That Taoist slander against the value of the governmental legacy of high antiquity prefigured *Tao-hsiieh* Confucians' condemnation of the Han and T'ang. Instead of continuing to misconstrue the historical character of the Master's work, Confucians should clarify the aspirations of the greatest Han and T'ang rulers and transform them into models relevant for addressing current problems. Thus Ch'en boldly drew a parallel between his own agenda and that of Confucius. Furthermore, if Chu were just to admit that the glory of the Three Dynasties was a myth, Ch'en would have had greater freedom to construct positive models for an ethic of end results from more recent historical sources.

Without attempting to answer Ch'en's bold image of Confucius directly, Chu attacked the ethics of Han and T'ang rulers. Refusing to focus on their deeds, Chu claimed that their motives were of more vital importance. Crassly delighting in attaining immediate results, these rulers had resorted to any available means. Thus expediency dominated their reigns. For example, selfish passions dictated the actions of T'ang T'ai-tsung (599–649, r. 626–49). It was merely his cleverness and ability to appropriate the appearance of virtue that had enabled him to surpass his rivals and firmly establish a dynasty. Was such relative success in expediency sufficient to make him an exemplary model? Furthermore, Chu objected most to the T'ang ruler's murder of his two brothers. During the Three Dynasties, the Duke of Chou (*Chou kung*) had also killed his two brothers; however, the Classics presented the Duke's two brothers as criminals plotting against the Chou house (*Chou wang-shih*). Chu similarly claimed, "The Duke of Chou had no choice but to execute them, but T'ang T'ai-tsung's case was obviously for the sake of rivalry for the throne."⁷⁶ Conventional assumptions about the motives operative in the two cases thus provided grounds for Chu to excuse one fratricide, but condemn the other.

In several comments to his students, however, Chu Hsi accepted a limited role for the expedient. Therein he permitted use of the expedient: if there were no other choices, if the matter involved only relatively minor principles, and if the exceptions were not regarded as a precedent which could be invoked in the future. Confucius (in *Analects*, 9/30) had said that few could join him

⁷⁶ Li, *Chu-tzu yü-lei* 37, p. 991, trans. from Wei, "Standard and expedient," p. 264.

in making situational judgments. Chu was so hesitant about people using the expedient that he interpreted Confucius's remark as a prohibition against ordinary people using such judgment. Chu's concern about people using expediency reflected his general uneasiness about literati deciding right and wrong on their own, for he feared that they would often mistake their own personal desires for Heaven's normative principles.

Chu perceived trends in Ch'en's area of Wu-chou as confirming his skepticism that the concept of the expedient encouraged ordinary literati to make concessions on matters of principle. He exclaimed,

True honesty is natural and intrinsic honesty. Today, scholars in central Chekiang follow only a general accommodating mentality; the motivation is not honesty. Honesty means when something proper can be done, simply do it without calculating advantages and disadvantages. Nowadays, these scholars calculate advantages and disadvantages to an extreme, which results in accommodation and nothing more. The corruption in all of this is: those with this penchant end up doing anything through which advantage is attainable.⁷⁷

Accordingly, Chu portrayed the penchant for expediency as the foundation for two quite distinct activities among Wu-chou scholars: endeavors (like Lü Tsu-ch'ien's) to achieve accommodation within the Confucian community, and efforts (like Ch'en Liang's) to maximize advantages through utilitarian schemes.

After Chu confronted Ch'en's idea of integrity as adjusting to time and situation, Chu sought to counterbalance Ch'eng I's similar pronouncement with the Han perspective which Ch'eng I had rejected. Striving to resolve the conflict between Ch'eng I and Han scholars about expediency, Chu noted that Han scholars addressed cases involving rites or decorum, but Ch'eng I equated the standard and the *Tao* because he spoke of the *Tao* as the universally valid principle. To Chu Hsi, Ch'eng I had been right, for the *Tao* penetrated, and served as the ground of, all things. Nevertheless, Han scholars had also been right, too, for the standard could also be understood on a different level from the expedient.⁷⁸ In this discussion of the standard and the *Tao*, Chu thus illustrated the importance of distinguishing between the level of speculations on nonempirical principles and the level of expositions on cultural values.

The *Tao* and history

Chu Hsi and Ch'en Liang used the term *Tao* on more than one level in their exchange, but scholars have generally interpreted it only on the level

⁷⁷ Li, *Chu-tzu yü-lei* 122, p. 2958, trans. from Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism*, p. 149.

⁷⁸ Wei, "Standard and expedient," pp. 258-9.

of nonempirical principles. Concentrating on the letters exchanged between the two men, scholars have read the debate as a metaphysical one.⁷⁹ Ch'en's essays that precipitated the debate provide a crucial component of context for statements within the letters, however. In his essays, Ch'en described a changing, even transitory, *Tao*; however, his letters focused on the continuity of the functioning of the *Tao* in history. Taken together, Ch'en's arguments suggest a *Tao* that was relative to time and situation; hence he was challenging Chu's concept of unchanging values rather than Chu's view of metaphysical principles.

Chu Hsi clearly perceived Ch'en's point to be this relativistic challenge to the enduring nature of values from high antiquity. He crystallized Ch'en's argument:

Your major theme does no more than champion the Han and T'ang in that you say they were not different from the Three Dynasties, and you demote the Three Dynasties to the level of the Han and T'ang. The premise of your view is simply that antiquity and contemporary times are different and the doings of the sages and worthy statesmen cannot be completely accepted as a standard.⁸⁰

Drawing together Ch'en's essays and letters, Chu highlighted an apparent contradiction: The Han and T'ang were not different from high antiquity, on the one hand, but on the other hand, antiquity and contemporary times were different. Actually, what Ch'en had proposed was that there was no *qualitative* difference between *unidealized* high antiquity and later dynasties. Chu realized Ch'en's distinction, for he also condemned Ch'en's slogan – the *Tao* was continuously present in history – as being nothing more than a ruse for equating later periods qualitatively with the golden age of the Three Dynasties. Chu rightly perceived the thrust of Ch'en's thesis to be this: changes over time militated against classical values serving as the standard for the present.

Chu further perceived that it was Ch'en's relativism toward values that had dictated his more abstract philosophical pronouncements. So Chu continued:

Thus, you had to go on to assert that, because Heaven, Earth, and Humankind unite to form a triad, it is unthinkable that Heaven and Earth could revolve alone if human activity ceased. As you see it, since Heaven and Earth eternally exist, Han and T'ang rulers only had to do as they did for them to be able to complete the human contribution and for Heaven and Earth to have something to depend upon to continue to the present.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Even though most modern scholars read the debate as primarily metaphysical, a particularly pronounced example is Carsun Chang's (Chang chün-mai or Chang Chia-sên) *The development of neo-Confucian thought*, Volume 1 (New York, 1957), p. 14.

⁸⁰ Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 36, pp. 22b–23a, trans. from Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism*, pp. 161–2, and discussion in chapter 5.

⁸¹ Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 36, pp. 22b–23a, trans. in Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism*, pp. 161–2.

In the Han period, Confucians had developed elaborate theories and patterns of order based on an assumed resonance between the social-political world and the natural realm of Heaven and Earth. Although neither Ch'en nor Chu accepted the elaborate systems of the Han cosmologists, they never completely abandoned the basic assumption of resonance. What disturbed Chu here was Ch'en's use of this conventional idea to support the notion that the continuing functioning of nature proved that the actions of some Han and T'ang rulers were confluent with the *Tao*. Chu was convinced that human fallibility undermined Ch'en's argument. According to Chu, Han and T'ang rulers could only appear to be in line with the *Tao* because Ch'en and others had created an artifice. In other words, their claim that the *Tao* was relative to time and situation allegedly masked an attempt to sanction the less-than-perfect level of accomplishments by rulers of recent dynasties.

All periods and personages in history had, Chu asserted, to be evaluated by the same set of standards. Allowing no qualitative difference in the standard for judging high antiquity and later dynasties, he was certain that later rulers failed to measure up to those of the Three Dynasties. That standard of value persisted even though the *Tao* had not been put into practice in the human realm for fifteen centuries.

Much of the difference in perspective here arose from the gap between the philosopher Chu, committed to classical truths transcending time, and the historian Ch'en, studying change through time. Chu tended to link Ch'en's ideas of utility and value to his historical studies. Ch'en had

dismissed the Classics while mastering history, ignored the ethical way of the true king while esteeming the expedient methods of the hegemon, and gone to extremes discussing the rise and fall of recent and ancient dynasties without seeking out the origins of inescapability and demise within the mind-and-heart.⁸²

Still, history remained within the scope of Chu's study, albeit as a secondary and subordinate field. In his exchanges with Ch'en, he even made telling points about Ch'en's willingness to gloss over the flaws of Han and T'ang rulers that had been preserved in historical records. Nevertheless, Chu was driven by his philosophical agenda in making these historical points, for he sought to undermine the foundations of Ch'en's relative and utilitarian ethics.

In summary, Ch'en Liang's historical studies and utilitarian ethics assaulted the absoluteness of Chu Hsi's values. On one flank, Ch'en's studies were grounded in historicist assumptions about differences between distinct periods of history that made standards relative to particular times and situations. On

⁸² Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 53, p. 33b. On the distinction between philosophers and historians, see Conrad Schirokauer, "Chu Hsi's sense of history," in *Ordering the world: Approaches to state and society in Sung dynasty China*, ed. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 193-221.

the other flank, Ch'en's utilitarian ethics fused results and advantages together with integrity and principle. Whereas Chu gave priority to questions of personal virtue and ethical principles, Ch'en claimed that any accomplishment for society or polity had its own inherent ethical justification. What energized the two flanks of Ch'en's assault upon Chu's timeless and absolute principles was apparently Ch'en's obsession with a war of irredenta. Ch'en reacted bitterly to the seeming lack of progress toward, and commitment to, achieving the national end of liberating North China from Jurchen control. Confucians interfered with the pursuit of this goal whenever they placed higher priority on defending archetypal cultural values than on addressing practical issues. Although Chu spoke more caustically against the dangers of Ch'en's challenge, scholarly attention has traditionally focused instead on Chu's disagreements with Lu Chiu-yüan.

Issues between Lu Chiu-yüan (Hsiang-shan) and Chu Hsi

The background of Lu Chiu-yüan had some parallels with Ch'en Liang's.⁸³ Neither's family had successfully won degrees or national office since the ninth century. Both men were in the first generation of their families since the late T'ang to win *chin-shih* degrees and national offices. The grandfathers of both men had fought against the Jurchen invaders, and both maintained martial preoccupations. Lu's Fu-chou in Chiang-nan-hsi province was even more of a hinterland area than Ch'en's Wu-chou in Liang-che-tung, but river transport connected each of them to more prosperous macroeconomic zones. Both families were well enough established as elite to benefit from marriage alliances with locally prominent families; moreover, Lu's and Ch'en's own spouses came

⁸³ On Lu Chiu-yüan's biography, see SS 434, pp. 12879–82; Franke, *Sung biographies*, pp. 675–9. Lu Chiu-yüan and his relations with Chu Hsi have been extensively studied by Chinese scholars, but see especially Hou Wai-lu et al., eds., *Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang t'ung-shih*, Volume 4B (Peking, 1960), pp. 648–92; Wang, *Chu-tzu nien-p'u* 2A–3B, *passim*; T'ang Chün-i, *Chung-kuo cbe-hsiieh yüan-lun: Yüan hsing p'ien* (Hong Kong, 1968), pp. 531–643; Ch'ien, *Chu-tzu*, Volume 3, pp. 293–488; Mou Tsung-san, *Ts'ung Lu Hsiang-shan tao Liu Chi-shan* (Taipei, 1979), *passim*; Mou, *Hsin-t'i yü hsing-t'i*, Volume 1, pp. 357–415; Li Chih-chien, *Lu Chiu-yüan cbe-hsiieh ssu-hsiang yen-chiu* (Cheng-chou, 1985); Ch'en, *Chu Hsi*, pp. 281–328; Chang Li-wen, *Tsou shang hsin-hsiieh chih lu: Lu Hsiang-shan ssu-hsiang te tsu-chi* (Peking, 1992); and Yü Ying-shih, *Chung-kuo chin-shih tsung-chiao lun-li yü shang-jen ching-shen* (Taipei, 1987), pp. 84–94. Studies in English include Huang Siu-chi, *Lu Hsiang-shan: A twelfth-century idealist philosopher* (New Haven, 1944); Chang, *The development of Neo-Confucian thought*, Volume 1, pp. 146–52, 285–309; Kim Oaksook Chun, "Chu Hsi and Lu Hsiang-shan: A study of philosophical achievements and controversy in neo-Confucianism" (diss., University of Iowa, 1980); Robert P. Hymes, "Lu Chiu-yüan, academies, and the problem of the local community," in *Neo-Confucian education: The formative stage*, ed. William Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee (Berkeley, 1989), pp. 432–56; Chan, *Chu Hsi: New studies*, pp. 435–61; Huang Chin-hsing, "Chu Hsi versus Lu Hsiang-shan: A philosophical interpretation," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 14 No. 2 (1987), pp. 179–208; Anne D. Birdwhistell, "Social reality and Lu Jiuyuan (1139–1193)," *Philosophy East and West* 47 No. 1 (January, 1997), pp. 47–65.

from families with mercantile wealth. Like Ch'en Liang, the Lus focused on family interests at the expense of community or charity institutions, which Chu championed. Conversely, Chu's relative lack of local family connections and marriage alliances probably inclined him to give greater priority to community institutions. Although the Lus set up a community granary, they apparently used it to bolster family influence. Beyond their attention to the interest of the family, both Lu and Ch'en focused more than Chu did on issues affecting the central government. Compared with the Ch'ens, the Lus were much more established among local mercantile and militia elites, so they far exceeded the Ch'ens in wealth and influence.

The Lus were as renowned for their family discipline and adherence to Confucian decorum as the Ch'ens were known for their failings. Decades of legal troubles beset Ch'en as he struggled for recognition before finally attaining his *chin-shih* degree in 1193 and accepting an official appointment; furthermore, such frustrations impelled his radicalism. In contrast, Lu won his *chin-shih* degree quite easily in 1172 and spent most of his adult life in a series of official posts. Taking such matters in stride, his thinking reflected serene confidence arising from his sense that it was easy to do the proper thing. With his confidence in the power inherent in his own mind for transforming himself, Lu sometimes exuberantly proclaimed grandiose philosophical slogans; in contrast, Ch'en dreamed of heroically masterminding military campaigns.

Lü Tsu-ch'ien served as an even more effective connection for Lu than for Ch'en. Lü Tsu-ch'ien discovered Lu's talent in the 1172 *chin-shih* examinations and subsequently recommended him to various friends, including Chu Hsi. Chu skeptically countered with reports that other friends compared Lu to Chang Chiu-ch'eng, whom Chu condemned for expressing Buddhist ideas in Confucian language. Responding to such concerns, Lü Tsu-ch'ien in 1175 made a long journey to bring the two sides together at the Goose Lake Monastery, in southeastern Chiang-nan-hsi.

Goose Lake debate and educational pedagogy

Lu Chiu-ling's opening poem set the agenda; he characterized Chu's focus on the residual texts of the sages as neglecting the original mind of the sages.⁸⁴ Lu Chiu-yüan then followed with a poem that even more biting rebuked

⁸⁴ On Lu Chiu-ling, see *SS* 434, pp. 12877–9. Besides the items in the previous note, see Julia Ching (Ch'in Chia-i), "The Goose Lake Monastery debate (1175)," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 1 No. 2 (March 1974), pp. 161–78; and Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh), "Chu: Lu O-hu chih hui pu-shu," in his *Chu-tzu lun-chi* (Taipei, 1982), pp. 233–49.

Chu's scholarship as fragmented and aimless. Downplaying book-learning and philosophical inquiry, the Lus argued that becoming a sage was a spontaneous process achieved through practice realizing the goodness innate within one's original mind. Chu and Lü criticized the Lu brothers' overly simplified approach and excessive self-confidence; from Chu and Lü's perspective, the Lu brothers downplayed classical scholarship in favor of a direct encounter with their original minds.

In retrospect, the debate at Goose Lake has been seen as the watershed between the Chu and Lu schools. However, the Lu brothers actually moderated their views after the debate. For example, after a twenty-day visit from Lu Chiu-ling in 1179, Lü Tsu-ch'ien informed Chu, "Acknowledging that his opinions at Goose Lake were completely wrong, he profoundly desires to record truths, read books, and discuss scholarship; such a tranquil mind and subdued demeanor are very rare among our mutual acquaintances."⁸⁵ Reporting to Lü Tsu-ch'ien about Lu Chiu-yüan's letters to mutual friends, Chu observed, "Lu actually tells others they must read books and discuss scholarship; hence, he realizes the error of his former views. However, he's unwilling to confess completely about being wrong in the past, but correct today."⁸⁶

Praising Lü Tsu-ch'ien as the leader of our culture, Lu Chiu-yüan came close to making a public confession in his eulogy to Lü late in 1181. Therein, he praised Lü Tsu-ch'ien's patient instruction, which had enabled him to reform some of his wild ideas; moreover, he acknowledged that his brother had also gravitated to Lü's standpoint. Indeed, Chu was so pleased with Lu's lecture during a visit in 1181 to the White Deer Grotto Academy that he had the lecture inscribed on a stone stele at the academy. Nonetheless, after Lü Tsu-ch'ien's restraining leadership had been laid to rest, relationships between the Lu brothers and Chu gradually became more tense during the mid-1180s.

By 1183, the debate had become characterized in terms of Section 27 of the *Doctrine of the mean*: the Lus emphasized "honoring the moral nature" where Chu was "following the path of inquiry and study." Although Chu's borrowing this paradigm added to its popularity, it seems quite clear that the primary issue remained methods of instruction. If taken to refer to larger philosophical issues, this distinction was more apparent than real, for Chu remained committed to the higher goal of using knowledge as part of one's spiritual cultivation to honor the moral nature. Chu's letters during the early to mid-1180s encouraged efforts to combine the best of both his and Lu's approaches. Upon hearing of Chu's effort to combine inquiry and study with honoring the moral nature, Lu expressed skepticism about the possibility of

⁸⁵ Lü, *Lü Tung-lai hsien-sheng wen-chi* 4, p. 77.

⁸⁶ Li, *Chu-tzu yü-lei* 34, p. 17a-b.

such a synthesis because honoring the moral nature had to be primary. Thus pedagogical differences remained.

Lu Chiu-yüan's evaluation of book-learning was rather complex. Touting the importance of reading, he claimed that study could transform one's natural endowment and enable one to become a better person. Besides the literal meaning of the text, one had to fathom its implicit meaning and apply what was read to oneself. On numerous occasions, he admonished people to study and read texts, even commentaries. Nevertheless, he could sometimes disparage the tendency of people to become lost in texts and commentaries. At times, he was given to spectacular sloganeering. In the most famous case, he proclaimed, "If in our study, we know the fundamentals, then all the Six Classics are footnotes to us."⁸⁷ This slogan, which was similar to one by Chang Chiu-ch'eng, has been interpreted by Chu and later scholars as an arrogant transcendence of the Classics. Furthermore, Lu's proclamation also resembles some of Chu Hsi's. For instance, Chu told his students, "When we read the Six Classics, it should be just as if there were no Six Classics. We're simply seeking the moral principle in ourselves – this principle is easy to understand."⁸⁸ Despite the similarities, Chu's statements have not been criticized as Lu's have been. Such criticism appears unfair when we take into consideration the larger context of his scholarship. Given how thoroughly the Classics permeated Lu's writings, he was probably trying only to draw attention dramatically to the fundamentals of understanding through inner experience and away from bookish approaches to the Classics. Some of Lu's statements downplaying the role of book-learning should be read with the understanding that he often spoke to much broader audiences than just the literati whom Chu customarily addressed. Even though Chu on occasion did address the masses, he wrote and spoke chiefly to fellow literati, for he concentrated on the educated class as the medium for transforming society and polity.

Although he shared Lu's commitment to the primacy of self-cultivation, Chu Hsi extended a much greater role to book-learning and erudition.⁸⁹ Pursuit of knowledge even had significant "autonomy" from political and

⁸⁷ Lu, *Lu Chiu-yüan chi* 34, p. 395, cf. trans. in Chan, *Source book*, p. 580.

⁸⁸ Li, *Chu-tzu yü-lei* 11, p. 188; trans., Daniel K. Gardner in Chu Hsi, *Learning to be a sage: Selections from the conversations of Master Chu, arranged topically* (Berkeley, 1990), p. 152.

⁸⁹ See particularly Yü Ying-shih, "Morality and knowledge in Chu Hsi's philosophical system," in *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh) (Honolulu, 1986), pp. 228–54. On Chu's view of reading, see also Daniel K. Gardner, "Transmitting the Way: Chu Hsi and his program of learning," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 49 No. 1 (June 1989), pp. 141–72; and Chu Hsi, *Learning to be a sage*; Susan Cherniack, "Book culture and textual transmission in Sung China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54 No. 1 (June 1994), pp. 5–125 *passim*; John B. Henderson, *Scripture, canon, and commentary: A comparison of Confucian and Western exegesis* (Princeton, 1991); and Steven van Zoeren, *Poetry and personality: Reading, exegesis, and hermeneutics in traditional China* (Stanford, 1991).

moralistic constraints because it provided the foundation for ethics. Chu also had a detailed and structured program wherein one read specific books in a prescribed order and with guides and commentaries; moreover, the most crucial of these aids came from his own hand. Similarly, although Chu substituted his study principles for the more detailed and conventional school rules, Lu dispensed with school rules altogether in his less structured teaching environment. Both stressed quality over quantity of reading, but Lu clearly settled for less extensive reading. Moreover, from Chu's perspective, Lu's focus on enlightenment revealed a Ch'an Buddhist penchant for slighting classical texts.

During the mid-1180s, Chu became increasingly distraught about Lu's teachings. By 1185, Chu was lamenting that *Tao-hsiieh* had been "ruined from within by members of our faction."⁹⁰ Besides condemning Wu-chou utilitarians, he criticized the Lu school for its Buddhist ideas. Still, he was not ready to expel these wayward Confucians from *Tao-hsiieh*. Indeed in 1186, he continued admonishing his students not to argue strenuously with the Lu camp. After an 1187 visit from Lu's students convinced him that they were "wildly arrogant perpetrators of mayhem," however, Chu swore that he would henceforth "clearly drum them out." Earlier, for the sake of the *Tao-hsiieh* fellowship, he had refrained from straightforwardly criticizing their Ch'an Buddhist penchant; as he explained, "Just because our faction was weak, I did not want to arouse internal contradictions."⁹¹ Writing directly to Lu, he complained about the grave danger to the *Tao* that Lu's students presented because of such Ch'an tendencies as downplaying the texts of the sages. In a similar case over seven years earlier, Lu had responded by reprimanding his own student. This time, Lu reported that he could not agree with Chu. Angered by Lu's refusal to recant, Chu directly criticized him early in 1188.

Why did Chu Hsi adopt a hard line toward the Lu camp in the late 1180s? Two of Lu's own activities might have provoked Chu. Lu had in 1187 returned to full-time teaching for the first time since the mid-1170s, coincidentally when the two first clashed. Having built an academy on Hsiang-shan (Elephant Mountain) in Ming-chou, Lu now posed more competition to Chu's teaching; moreover, he would be asked to expound on differences between his ideas and Chu's. Lu also drew Chu's ire with his essay to commemorate the renovation of Wang An-shih's memorial hall in Fu-chou in the first month of 1188. Daring to give Wang's reforms high marks and to place much of the blame for the failures of the reforms upon the Yüan-yü conservatives, Lu's positive evaluation of Wang irritated Chu. Chu complained, "Lu's evaluations all arise from his scholarship being decadent and

⁹⁰ Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 35, p. 22a.

⁹¹ Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 50, pp. 29b-30a and 54, p. 28b.

his perceptions being dim; moreover, his private opinions make the essay even worse.”⁹²

Debate over the Ultimate and Chu's authority

As tensions increased, Chu and two of the Lu brothers clashed over the term *Wu-chi* (Ultimate of Nonbeing), in Chou Tun-i's *Explanation of the diagram of the Supreme Ultimate*. (Such terms as “Supreme Ultimate” should not be confused with debates about universal form in Western philosophy.) Noting that the term did not occur in Chou's major work, Lu Chiu-shao (1120s–90s) asserted that the *Explanation of the diagram* must have been someone else's work.⁹³ Or, if Chou actually wrote the explanation, he must have later realized the Taoist roots of the term “Ultimate of Nonbeing,” because he never used the term again. Chu defended Chou's positing the concept of the Ultimate of Nonbeing above the Supreme Ultimate. Without this additional concept, scholars might – Chu asserted – mistake the Supreme Ultimate for simply another empirical entity. Similar to his responses to Ch'en Liang, Chu further alleged that Lu's fallacious opinions stemmed from personal imperfections. Challenged so directly about Chou's *Explanation of the diagram*, Chu finally in 1188 published his own exposition on Chou's work. Chu had been reluctant to release what he had written a decade earlier because of widespread belief that the *Diagram* was heterodox.

After his brother despaired of dealing with Chu's argumentativeness, Lu Chiu-yüan responded to Chu's defense of Chou. Lu asked, why was it necessary to belittle the work of Confucius by adding on the notion of the Ultimate of Nonbeing to his concept of the Supreme Ultimate? In his Appended Remarks to the *Book of changes*, Confucius had spoken only of the Supreme Ultimate. Lu further reasoned,

In all the centuries since the Appended Remarks, until the present, I have never heard of anyone mistakenly regarding the Supreme Ultimate as just another finite entity. Supposing there was someone so stupid as to be unable to get the point from these passages, how could he possibly be helped simply by our old master Chou adding the two words “Ultimate of Nonbeing” to the Supreme Ultimate?⁹⁴

If Chu really feared that some witless fellow might mistake the Ultimate for a physical entity, Lu advised him to adopt from the classic *Book of poetry* (*Shih-ching*) the words “invisible and inaudible,” which Ode 235 had used to

⁹² Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 53, p. 1b, also 70, pp. 6b–13a; Li, *Chu-tzu yü-lei* 124, p. 2978; and Lu, *Lu Chiu-yüan chi* 19, pp. 231–4.

⁹³ On Lu Chiu-shao, see SS 434, p. 12879. Chou's *Explanation of the diagram of the Supreme Ultimate* has been translated in Chan, *Source book*, pp. 463–4.

⁹⁴ Lu, *Lu Chiu-yüan chi* 2, p. 23.

describe the nonempirical character of Heaven. Why go outside Confucianism for a less satisfactory term? As Chu Chen had already established in the 1130s, the *Diagram* had been produced by a Taoist monk. Moreover, everyone knew that the term "Ultimate of Nonbeing" had been coined by Lao-tzu and utilized by Chuang-tzu. Thus the term had come from these two ancient Taoist philosophers. Even if Chou were the one who had written the *Explanation of the diagram*, his major students, the Ch'eng brothers, had surely rejected it, for they never mentioned the notion of the Ultimate of Nonbeing.⁹⁵ Given the importance to Confucians of the genealogy of a concept or text in evaluating its validity, Lu had raised serious doubts about a concept that was central to Chu's version of *Tao-hsieh*.

Ignoring the earlier scholarship on Chou that Lu had cited, Chu Hsi set aside Lu's objection that Confucius had never utilized the term, "Ultimate of Nonbeing." Chu even asserted that Chou's profound insight into the true essence of the Supreme Ultimate enabled him to "grasp a secret which had not been transmitted to a thousand earlier sages."⁹⁶ Moreover, Chu sought to distinguish Chou's special use of the term "Ultimate of Nonbeing" (which indicated real principle, or *li*) from Taoist meanings (which indicated an empty limitlessness). The Taoists regarded Being and Nonbeing as two separate entities, but Chou realized that they were aspects of one reality. At the end of his letter, however, Chu mentioned that a draft national history (*kuo-shih*) had two extra words in the crucial sentence from Chou's *Explanation of the diagram*. The sentence would then read, "from [tzu] the Ultimate of Nonbeing *erb* {and also (to Chu), and then (to Lu)} became [wei] the Supreme Ultimate."⁹⁷ If these two extra words were actually Chou's, then Lu's criticism of Chou for bifurcating reality into Being and Nonbeing would be correct. Chu suspected that the two extra words had been added by the compilers, however.⁹⁸ This national history merely enhanced the inconclusiveness of the famous exchange about Chou's usage of the Ultimate of Nonbeing.

As the inconclusiveness of the debate over the Ultimate became apparent, both men turned more of their attention to the issue of distinguishing objective truth from subjective opinions, but modern scholars have largely ignored this latter part of the debate. By questioning Chu's objectivity and fidelity to the Classics, Lu challenged Chu's authority to define the tradition. In the first

⁹⁵ For recent scholarship on the issue of the origins of Chou's *Diagram*, see especially Azuma Jūji, "Taikyoku zu no keisei: Ju Butsu Dō Sankyo o meguru sai kentō," *Nihon Chūgoku gakkaibō* 46 (October 1994), pp. 73–86; Teng, "Kuan-yü Chou Tun-i te shih-ch'eng ho chuan-shou," pp. 289–313; and Shu, *Chu-tzu*, pp. 663–706. Kim Byoung Hwan, "A study of Chou Tun-i's (1017–1073) thought" (diss., University of Arizona, 1966), provides a defense against charges of Taoist influences on Chou.

⁹⁶ Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 36, p. 9a. ⁹⁷ Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 36, p. 16b.

⁹⁸ Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 36, p. 16b. Shu, *Chu-tzu*, pp. 663–84, supports Chu's claim.

set of letters, Lu urged Chu to be more open to others' views and to join in discussing principles according to the facts. Chu replied that a consensus of opinion reached through discussion was an inadequate gauge because a standard was needed for weighing individual views. Although difficult to attain, true insight into principle would, Chu insisted, enable one easily to distinguish right from wrong in other people's statements.

Lu, in turn, placed both himself and Chu in the same predicament – adrift amid diverse subjective opinions. Boldly, Lu asked what in our terms would be a question about objectivity of knowing, or the basis for intellectual authority: “Even though we might consider that our own perception of principle is already clear, how are we to know that it's not merely our own private opinions or confused theories?”⁹⁹ Such confusion reigned because scholars for centuries had been pursuing literary culture and broad erudition instead of simply seeking the truth from facts. Even though Confucius provided an excellent model for examining facts without abstracted theorizing, some of his closest students, such as Tzu-kung (520–c.450 BC), had become seduced by their fondness for erudition. When transmitting the *Tao*, Confucius had no choice but to bypass Tzu-kung. Lu was thus warning Chu against this fatal flaw of excessive confidence in erudition. Chu's characterization of Chou Tun-i as having realized a truth about the essence of the Ultimate that had been unknown to the sages also played into Lu's hands. Because Chu embraced Chou's concept of the Ultimate of Nonbeing as his unique prophetic vision, Lu contrasted Chu's agenda with Confucius' pragmatic and systematic quest for truth through examining facts. What could be further from the learning of Confucius, Lu alleged, than Chu's textual erudition and anxiety about mysterious secrets revealed first to Chou Tun-i by Heaven?

Needless to say, Chu rejected this sharp contrast between his erudition and Confucius' learning. Besides a sense of the unity of the *Tao*, Confucius enjoyed a love of inquiry and broad learning. Addressing Lu's skepticism about Chu's line of authority for transmitting the *Tao*, Chu wrote,

The reason Yen-tzu (521–490 BC) and Tseng-tzu (505–c.436 BC) alone received the transmission of the sage's learning was simply due to their broad culture, strict propriety and complete realization. They were not selected as a result of some empty fabrications. Although Tzu-kung did not receive the transmission of the *Tao*, what he knew also appears to have been no less than our contemporaries – even though he never had Ch'an learning as a camouflage. The time of Chou and the Ch'engs was much later than Mencius, but their *Taos* coincided.¹⁰⁰

Defending Chou and the Ch'engs as having recovered the transmission of the *Tao*, Chu was implicitly placing himself in a succession of authority based

⁹⁹ Lu, *Lu Chiu- yüan chi* 2, p. 26.

¹⁰⁰ Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 36, pp. 15b–16a.

upon liberal culture or broad learning, strict propriety, and complete realization of the unity of the *Tao*. By comparing his contemporaries unfavorably with Tzu-kung because of their Ch'an ideas, Chu was also turning the tables on Lu for similarly criticizing him. Lu's attitude, Chu further charged, had become the real obstacle to reaching an understanding of the truth. Furthermore, although he acknowledged the incisiveness of Lu's question about the difficulty of knowing if one's grasp of principle reflected any more than mere private opinion, Chu set the issue aside with an admonition for Lu to reflect upon his own errors.

Chu thus dealt inadequately with Lu's probing questions regarding how to determine if one's perceptions of principles in the Classics were anything more than one's own subjective opinions. Generally ignoring Chu's response to this challenge, modern scholars have constructed a far more systematic and reasoned presentation of Chu's views regarding the objectivity of texts.¹⁰¹ According to such reconstructions, Chu's hermeneutics provided guidelines for respecting the integrity or autonomy of texts; moreover, his concern to have an objective standard for knowing principles led to his rules for book-learning. Nevertheless, in his contested exchanges with Lu, Chu tended to present his views less effectively than the reconstructions of modern scholars who extrapolate from statements in a range of his writings (but primarily his uncontested, authoritative statements in his commentaries and to his students). These modern reconstructions of Chu's hermeneutics also generally ignore his excising of passages from Hu Hung's *Understanding of words* and his omitting of crucial essays and letters from Chang Shih's collected writings. From such discrepancies, it would appear that investigations of Chu's thought need to encompass not only philosophical and textual studies but also contextual explorations of contested exchanges with his contemporaries.

Scholars have over the centuries discussed differences between Chu and Lu largely in terms of an issue that they never explicitly debated. Lu equated the mind with principle, whereas Chu identified the inner nature with principle. Instead of seeing the mind essentially as a repository for principles per se, Chu generally regarded the mind as having a priori modes for understanding principles.¹⁰² These basic assumptions were not irrelevant to the debate. For example, because he regarded the mind as principle, Lu had greater confidence in reaching the truth through discussion and was wary of being led away from essential principles by excessive book-learning. Lu's view of *yin* and *yang* as the nonempirical *Tao* also reflected his refusal to divide mind and principle

¹⁰¹ See examples listed in note 89 above.

¹⁰² Yü, "Morality and knowledge," pp. 243–8; T'ang Chün-i, *Chung-kuo che-hsiieh yüan lun* (Hong Kong, 1966), pp. 399–499; Ch'en, *Chu Hsi*, pp. 337–55.

into separate realms. Apparently, he was not affected by Chu's philosophical need either for a realm of nonempirical principles or for the concept of human nature to serve as intermediary between mind and principle.

With the debate ending in an abrupt stalemate, relations between their schools became more acrimonious. In his letters and statements to students, Lu characterized Chu's views as heretical and confused. For example, pointing to what he regarded as Chu's fatal flaw, he said, "Although Chu's scholarship is as lofty as Mount T'ai (T'ai-shan), it's a pity that he cannot reach the *Tao* through his learning. Therefore, he is essentially wasting his energy without making any inner progress."¹⁰³ Many of Chu's most critical comments about Lu's Buddhist tendencies were also made during the 1190s. Ironically, although Chu became increasingly critical of the Lu camp, he developed much greater hostility toward Wu-chou scholars, even including his former best friend Lü Tsu-ch'ien. During the 1170s, he had been philosophically closer to Lü Tsu-ch'ien, but by the late 1180s he condemned his deceased friend as being more wrong than Lu. Lü Tsu-ch'ien had allegedly focused upon the secondary and external, whereas Lu had at least been concentrating on the primary and internal. Although continuing to present himself as the mean between these rival schools, Chu's language suggests that during the 1190s he perceived greater common ground with Lu's former students than with Lü Tsu-ch'ien's.

Overall, Chu demonstrated his more analytical and scholarly reading of the Classics. Lu's reading was more literal, straightforward, and holistic. Chu even complained about Lu "simply following the words of the Classics to give forth explanations" and "quoting extended passages in their entirety without becoming weary."¹⁰⁴ Lu's facility in quoting the Classics to make his points should qualify some prevalent impressions about his lack of seriousness and abilities in reading the Classics. Such impressions about Lu have been influenced by Chu's more dominant criticism of Lu for disregarding the Classics. This more persistent aspect of Chu's perspective became entrenched among his followers, who succeeded in gaining recognition of his version of the tradition and succession of the *Tao*.

THE FOURTH PERIOD, 1202-1279

After concerted political efforts to suppress a broad range of *Tao-hsüeh* teachings and masters during the last seven years of the third period, the ban against *Tao-hsüeh* was lifted in 1202. After two decades of politicized controversy, *Tao-hsüeh* as a Confucian group appeared moribund. By 1241, however, the

¹⁰³ Lu, *Lu Chiu-yüan chi* 34, p. 414, and also 34, pp. 419-20.

¹⁰⁴ Chu, *Hui-an Chu Wen-kung wen-chi* 36, pp. 10a, 13b.

emperor had officially recognized its version of Confucianism as state orthodoxy, a status that it retained until the twentieth century. Later, the Yüan, Ming and Ch'ing dynasties (1260–1912) had their own reasons for recognizing Chu's mainstream as state orthodoxy. Chu Hsi in particular emerged during the thirteenth century as the primary twelfth-century symbol of *Tao-hsiieh*. What accounts for these changes? Answers have often concentrated exclusively on *either* the contributions of selected students of Chu Hsi *or* the demands of political expediency in response to the Mongol threat from the north.¹⁰⁵ Even though these thirteenth-century developments will be the focus in this section, Chu's own role should be kept in mind. Besides the influence of this scholarship (particularly through his commentaries and records of his conversations with students), his community and educational institutions, and so on, my own emphasis has been on the politics of the era, and also on Chu's personal advantages (early degree, many years dedicated to scholarship, seniority, combative personality, ambition to become the authoritative reader of the Classics and of the Confucian tradition, and so on), as well as his use of rituals to enhance his authority, his editing of contemporary sources, and his efforts to promote himself and denigrate his rivals inside and outside the *Tao-hsiieh* fellowship.¹⁰⁶ All of these factors have to be taken into account in a relatively comprehensive view.

Student numbers and their geographical distribution were a factor. Lu Chiu-yüan taught several thousand people, but few were literati. The number of his dedicated literati students certainly fell far short of Chu Hsi's. Although

¹⁰⁵ Japanese scholars emphasize the role of Chu Hsi's disciples; for example, see Ichiki Tsuyuhiko, *Shu Ki monjin shudan keisei no kenkyū* (Tōkyō, 2002). This emphasis in Japanese and Chinese scholarship has dominated American interpretations, such as William Theodore de Bary, *The message of the mind*; and his *Neo-Confucian orthodoxy and the learning of the mind-and-heart* (New York, 1981). Liu, *China turning*, exemplifies the argument for the Sung government's consideration of political expediency.

¹⁰⁶ See especially my *Utilitarian Confucianism*, and my *Confucian discourse*. For a thoroughly documented case for the primary importance of political factors and struggles in the evolution of *Tao-hsiieh*, see Yü, *Chu Hsi te li-shih shih-chieh*. For Chu's manipulation of prayers to Confucius and rituals to sages, see my "Zhu Xi's prayers to the spirit of Confucius and claim to the transmission of the Way"; and my "One significant rise in Chu-ko Liang's popularity: An impact of the 1127 Jurchen conquest," *Han-hsiieh yen-chiu* 14 No. 2 (1996), pp. 13–15. For his use of shrines to Tao-hsiieh masters and local worthies, see Ellen G. Neskari, *Politics and prayer: Shrines to local former worthies in Sung China* (Cambridge, MA, 2001). For the importance of Chu's and his disciples' rewriting of histories, see Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way*; and Hartman, "The making of a villain." For a focus on the importance of academies, see particularly Walton, *Academies and society in Southern Sung China*; and Thomas H. C. Lee (Li Hung-ch'i), *Education in traditional China: A history* (Leiden, 2000). For a reminder of the importance of genre studies in shifting cultural balances toward *Tao-hsiieh*, see Daniel K. Gardner, "Modes of thinking and modes of discourse in the Sung: Some thoughts on the *Yu-lü* ('Recorded conversations') texts," *Journal of Asian Studies* 50 No. 3 (August 1991), pp. 574–603; and Hilde De Werdt, "The composition of examination standards: Daoxue and Southern Song dynasty examination culture" (diss., Harvard University, 1998); as well as her "Canon formation and examinations culture: The construction of Guwen and Daoxue traditions," *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies* 29 (1999), pp. 91–132.

one of his contemporaries mentioned that Chu had about a thousand students, modern scholars have been able to list the names of only 467 literati who sought his instruction and/or advice at one time or another.¹⁰⁷ Between one-third and one-half of Chu's disciples hailed from the prosperous southeastern area of Fu-chien, thus his school easily dominated that key province. Almost as many lived in the two circuits of Liang-che and Chiang-nan-hsi, hence he made substantial inroads into the base areas of his major intellectual rivals. For most of the Southern Sung, Liang-che was the primary intellectual center, and academies established there continued to contribute significantly to Confucian scholarship even after the end of the Sung. After Lü Tsu-ch'ien died in 1181, however, the intellectual center of *Tao-hsüeh* Confucianism from the early 1180s to the mid-1230s shifted to Fu-chien under the influence of Chu and his immediate successors. That half-century proved to be the crucial pivot in the evolution of the *Tao-hsüeh* fellowship.

One Fu-chien disciple who felt that he had a special commission from Chu Hsi was Ch'en Ch'un. Chu had taught him to seek for the Source of the Principle of Nature, a doctrine that, Ch'en Ch'un believed, Chu had not discussed with anyone else. This transmission occurred in 1190-1 when he had his first opportunity to listen to Chu. Late in 1199, he and his father-in-law finally journeyed from Chang-chou in southern Fu-chien to seek further instruction from the Master. Although already ill, Chu devoted much time to Ch'en. Chu admonished him to seek within himself after his return home and also Ch'en's father-in-law to travel more widely. Hence, Chu's words encouraged them to take a leadership role. Ch'en's major work was *Pei-hsi tzu-i* (*Terms explained*), a systematic exposition of twenty-five of Chu's most central philosophical concepts. Because of its clarity, this book soon became a guide for students reading Chu's diverse writings. Ch'en also delivered famous lectures in 1217 at Yen-chou, in central Chekiang, during one of the few times he traveled away from his home in southern Fu-chien. In the second of the lectures, he reiterated the concept of the succession of the *Tao* and centered attention on Chu as having uniquely received the transmission of the *Tao* from Chou and the Ch'engs. Ch'en portrayed Chu as having completed the tradition: "He got at the subtle words and ideas the Ch'engs had left to posterity and refined and clarified them. Looking back, he penetrated the minds of the sages, and looking to the present he drew together the many schools and assembled them as one."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Tanaka Kenji, "Shumon deshi shiji nenkō," *Tōbō gakubō* 44 No. 1 (February 1973), pp. 147-218, and 48 No. 2 (December 1975), pp. 261-357; Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh), *Chu-tzu men-jen* (Taipei, 1982), pp. 1-27.

¹⁰⁸ Ch'en Ch'un, *Pei-hsi tzu-i*, ed. Hsiung Kuo-chen and Kao Liu-shui (Peking, 1983), pp. 76-7, trans. from de Bary, *The message of the mind*, p. 38, cf. trans. in Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh),

Henceforth, Chu would be the only gateway to the learning of the sages. Moreover, alternatives presented by Ch'en Liang and Lu Chiu-yüan should no longer be allowed to disturb "this *Tao* of ours." So bitterly did he react to Lu Chiu-yüan's followers in Yen-chou that Ch'en has been widely regarded as sharply partisan.

Chu Hsi's more clearly designated successor was Huang Kan (1152–1221). Among the earliest to study with Chu, Huang had long demonstrated utmost reverence for Chu and dedication to his teachings; moreover, he became Chu's son-in-law. In his final days, Chu wrote to him, "This *Tao* of ours is entrusted to you, so I die with no regrets."¹⁰⁹ Besides being designated heir by the Master, Huang was otherwise superbly qualified. As a member of the Fu-chien elite, he had status and close ties to the largest block of Chu's leading disciples. As a successful official in various areas of the country during the first two decades of the thirteenth century, his governmental service added to his prestige and the visibility of the Chu school. When he retired back to Fu-chien, scholars from other provinces came to study with him. Sensitive to organizational activities, he lauded a fellow student from Kiangsi for having begun the custom of quarterly meetings of "our faction" there. Beyond faithfully teaching Chu's doctrines, he co-edited the first collection of Chu's recorded conversations and wrote one of the first biographies of Chu.

To Huang, Chu Hsi was the culmination of the *Tao-hsieh* tradition. Near the end of his biography of Chu, he concluded,

The transmission of the correct orthodox tradition of the *Tao* required the proper men. From the Chou dynasty (1046–256 BC) on, there have been only several people capable of inheriting the correct tradition and transmitting the *Tao*, and only one or two could enable the *Tao* to achieve prominence. After Confucius, it was perpetuated in its subtlety by Tseng-tzu and Tzu-ssu (481–402 BC), but it was not prominent until Mencius. After Mencius, the Four Masters – Chou [Tun-i], the Ch'engs [Ch'eng I and Ch'eng Hao] and Chang [Tsai] – continued the interrupted tradition, but only with our Master Chu did it become prominent.¹¹⁰

Neo-Confucian terms explained (the Pei-hsi tzu-i) by Ch'en Ch'un, 1159–1223 (New York, 1986), pp. 181–2. Ichiki, *Shuki monjin shudan keisei no kenkyū*, highlights Ch'en's role in promoting Chu Hsi. See also John Berthrong, "Glosses on reality: Chu Hsi as interpreted by Ch'en Ch'un" (diss., University of Chicago, 1979). On Ch'en, see SS 430, pp. 12788–90; Franke, *Sung biographies*, pp. 95–7.

¹⁰⁹ SS 430, p. 12778. On Huang Kan, see SS 430, pp. 12777–82; Franke, *Sung biographies*, pp. 451–4; Makeham, *Transmitters and creators*, chapters 3–5; and Mao Huaixin, "The establishment of the school of Chu Hsi in Fukien," in *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Chan Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh) (Honolulu, 1986), pp. 503–20; and Fang Yen-shou, *Chu Hsi shu-yüan men-jen k'ao* (Shanghai, 2000). For discussions of Chu's main disciples, see also Morohashi Tetsuji and Yasuoka Masahiro, eds., *Shushigaku taikēi*, Volume 10 (Tōkyō, 1974), *passim*; Tanaka, "Shumon deshi," *passim*; and Chan, *Chu-tzu men-jen*, *passim*.

¹¹⁰ Huang Kan, *Mien-chai chi (Ssu-k'ü ch'üan-shu ed.)*, 36, p. 48a–b, trans. adapted from Chan, "Chu's completion," p. 75. The words between Confucius and the Four Masters are not in this edition, but have

Equating Chu's role with that of Mencius, Huang elevated his master above the Four Masters of the Northern Sung. Elsewhere, he elaborated on the unique contributions of major sages in the transmission of the *Tao*. Again, the succession culminated with Chu Hsi. Chu was presented as receiving the *Tao* directly from the Ch'engs just as Chou had repossessed it centuries after the death of Mencius. The tradition of the *Tao* as identified by Chu was "what the scholar should follow and preserve; to deviate from it is to err."¹¹¹ As evident here, Huang took a scholastic approach, systematizing received teachings in an effort to build an orthodoxy.

One of Huang Kan's students, Ho Chi (1188–1268), established the Chu Hsi school firmly in Wu-chou, Liang-che-tung; moreover, a series of four Chin-hua masters made Wu-chou the center of Chu Hsi orthodoxy for over a century.¹¹² By claiming that Huang Kan was the primary inheritor of Chu's transmission of the *Tao*, they projected themselves as Huang's successors and relegated others, such as Ch'en Ch'un, to branch lineages. Following Huang's focus on Chu's commentaries upon the Four Books instead of Ch'en Ch'un's concentration on *Reflections upon things at hand* (*Chin-ssu lu*), they made Chu even more central at the expense of even the Four Masters of the Northern Sung. In reality, their ideas on practical affairs of state revealed continuities with the Wu-chou teachings of Lü Tsu-ch'ien, Ch'en Liang, and Ch'en Fu-liang (1137–1203). Nevertheless, they presented themselves as the continuation of the most orthodox Chu school, and most later scholars have accepted their claim because Chin-hua played such a major role in transmitting Chu's ideas into the Yüan and Ming.

Huang Kan had, however, drawn special attention to two other men as the ones who would transmit Chu's teachings to the next generation. Writing as an old man in 1219 to a colleague, Huang had praised the scholarship of Chen Te-hsiu (1178–1235) and Ch'en Mi (1171–1230): "They are like great spirits protecting our doctrines and institutions. Since our former Master Chu passed away, they are the ones upon whom we depend to carry on the tradition. What a joy!"¹¹³ In a letter to Chen Te-hsiu, Huang further praised his political stance

been preserved in the version annotated by Yi Huang (T'oegye) (1501–70) under the title *Chu-tzu hsing-chuang* (Kyōto and Osaka 1804 ed.; Taipei, 1979), p. 65b.

¹¹¹ "Sheng-hsien tao-t'ung ch'uan-shou tsung-hsi shuo," in Huang, *Mien-chai chi* 3, pp. 17a–19b, especially p. 19b; trans. adapted from de Bary, *Confucian orthodoxy*, p. 11, and discussed on pp. 10–12 and in his *The message of the mind*, pp. 37–8.

¹¹² SS 438, pp. 12979–80; SYHA 82, pp. 2725–33; and Ch'iu et al., eds., *Sung Ming li-hsiieh shih*, Volume 1, pp. 645–76. See also Peter K. Bol, "Neo-Confucianism and local society, twelfth to sixteenth century: A case study," in *The Song–Yuan–Ming transition in Chinese history*, ed. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, MA, 2003), pp. 241–83.

¹¹³ Huang, *Mien-chai chi* 5, p. 23a–b, letter to Li Fan (1163–1232, 1190 *chin shih*), trans. adapted from Chu Ron-Guey, "Chen Te-hsiu and the 'Classic of governance'" (diss., Columbia University, 1988), p. 120,

and representation of the Chu school. Ironically, Chen had earlier received his *chin-shih* degree in 1199 when he had no choice but to swear that he had no connection to the *Tao-hsiieh* faction. It was only after winning the prestigious Erudite Literatus degree in 1205 that Chen began studying Chu's writings, but he soon became recognized for his scholarship on Chu. Chen went even further than Ch'en Ch'un and Huang Kan in elevating Chu above Chang Tsai, for he lauded Chu as one of the Four Masters who had been entrusted by Heaven with long-lost secrets about the *Tao*.¹¹⁴ Chen's *Ta-hsiieh yen-i* (*Extended meaning of the Great learning*) drew heavily from Chu's writings on this classic to elaborate upon a program for the emperor's spiritual cultivation as the foundation of governance. In his *Hsin ching* (*Classic of the mind-and-heart*), Chen quoted Chu, along with Chou and the Ch'engs, as authoritative classics in their own right. Both of these works had been written during an extended period out of office, but when the emperor summoned him, he was able to present both works to the throne in 1234. During these presentations, Chen had the opportunity to urge Li-tsung (r. 1224–64) to extend official recognition to *Tao-hsiieh*.

Building on eulogies to Chen Te-hsiu, the editors of the *Official history of the Sung* (*Sung shih*) proclaimed, "Chen single-handedly and valiantly took upon himself the responsibility for [preserving] 'this culture' [using the language of Confucius in describing his own mission]. Thus, with the proscription lifted, it was largely through his efforts that the correct learning could be made clearly known throughout the land and to later generations."¹¹⁵ Citing and extrapolating from this evidence, some modern scholars have credited Chen, along with his colleague Wei Liao-weng (1178–1237), with convincing the government to reverse its ban against *Tao-hsiieh*.

A closer look raises doubts that Chen and Wei had such an impact on court policy, however. Although they were among the most senior and respected *Tao-hsiieh* statesmen of the day, both had been locked out of government service for years by Shih Mi-yüan (1164–1233). Only after this chief councilor died did Chen and Wei resume their political careers. Within a few months of his arrival at court in the autumn of 1234, Chen died, however. Wei's efforts to influence administrative and military policy were quickly frustrated, and he was soon demoted to prefectural administration, where he died in 1237. At court only briefly in the 1230s, neither elder statesman had any proven impact on the policy reversal. Although the court had at times over the previous four

and his discussion, *passim*. See also de Bary, *Confucian orthodoxy*, pp. 73–126; Franke, *Sung biographies*, pp. 88–90; SS 437, pp. 12957–65.

¹¹⁴ Chen Te-hsiu, *Chen Hsi-shan hsien-sheng chi* (Taipei, 1968) 2, pp. 1b and 20b.

¹¹⁵ SS 437, p. 12964, trans. adapted from de Bary, *Confucian orthodoxy*, p. 88; unique role for Chen claimed as in de Bary, *The message of the mind*, pp. 45, 87–9.

decades extended some honors to individual *Tao-hsüeh* Confucians, it did not reverse its policy and extend official recognition to their teachings until 1241.

In 1241, Li-tsung published an imperial eulogy that fully embraced *Tao-hsüeh* claims to orthodoxy. Although a few *Tao-hsüeh* Confucians obtained prominent posts, they were given no authority to change actual policies; therefore their victory was largely a cosmetic one. The government still appointed officials from other intellectual orientations; furthermore, the court could continue to select ideas and symbols from other traditions in its efforts to preserve social order. Still, the recognition of *Tao-hsüeh* altered the relationship between the fellowship and the state. Moreover, the popularity of the fellowship among literati and the content of its teachings interjected a degree of restraint on the discourse and behavior of members of the government. Thus the decision of 1241 and its legacy into the early twentieth century should not be dismissed as meaningless.

The crucial role of convincing the emperor to make the proclamation in 1241 must have been played by someone who had influence at the imperial court and was active for several years leading up to 1241. The biography of Ch'iao Hsing-chien (1156–1241) in the *Official history of the Sung* mentions that he cautiously finessed in 1234 a proposal to bestow special honors in the Confucian temple upon Chu Hsi and five Northern Sung philosophers.¹¹⁶ Chu was the one twelfth-century *Tao-hsüeh* Confucian so honored on that occasion. Even though Ch'iao himself had been a student of Lü Tsu-ch'ien, he sought the honors for Chu instead of for Lü. Like his teacher, Ch'iao acted on behalf of the larger interests of both the *Tao-hsüeh* fellowship and the Sung court. His actions further evidence that by the 1230s Chu had become a symbol to almost all *Tao-hsüeh* Confucians, regardless of the lineage of their ideas or teachers. As a senior veteran court politician, Ch'iao remained active until after the court officially reversed its policy; therefore he was in a good position to continue his low-keyed lobbying. It seems quite likely that this adept chief councilor had more influence than Chen Te-hsiu in effecting the change of court policy. Further support for crediting court officers like Ch'iao with the reversal arises when the political reasons behind it are considered.

Political expediency largely dictated the reversal of court policy regarding *Tao-hsüeh*.¹¹⁷ Even Han T'o-chou realized that the ban against *Tao-hsüeh* had gone too far in alienating intellectuals; therefore he had it ended in 1202.

¹¹⁶ SS 417, pp. 12489–95. For an excellent study of the importance of enshrinement in the Confucian temple throughout Chinese history, see Huang Chin-hsing, *Yu ju sheng yü: Ch'üan-li, hsin-yang yü cheng-tang-hsing* (Taipei, 1994); or his article that summarizes much of this thesis: Huang Chin-hsing, "The Confucian temple as a ritual system: Manifestation of power, belief and legitimacy in traditional China," *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, new series 25 No. 2 (1998), pp. 115–36.

¹¹⁷ This surmise is Liu's in "Orthodoxy," pp. 501–4, and reiterated in *China turning*, pp. 1446–9.

Moreover, he sought to attract leading figures on the proscribed list back into the government. The most prominent ones to accept the offer to serve under their former tormentor were Huang Kan and Yeh Shih. After Han's failed war against the Jurchen cost him his head in 1207, the new chief counselor, Shih Mi-yüan, went further to appease *Tao-hsiieh* intellectuals by having Ning-tsung bestow honorific titles at various times upon the Ch'eng brothers, Chou Tun-i, Chang Tsai, Chu Hsi, Chang Shih, Lü Tsu-ch'ien, and Lu Chiu-yüan. In the wake of a crisis accompanying the enthronement of Li-tsung in 1224, Shih Mi-yüan sought further collaboration with *Tao-hsiieh* critics. When they criticized his handling of the succession, however, he purged them and effectively locked them out of office until his death in 1233.

Expediency became more pressing during the 1230s as the Mongols reached the Sung border and also asserted Confucian legitimacy through rebuilding the temple to Confucius in Ta-tu (modern Peking) and nominally adopting the civil service examinations. To counter Mongol encroachments, the Sung court had to bolster its own cultural legitimacy. By embracing *Tao-hsiieh* claims about the transmission of the *Tao* to the South in the early twelfth century, the court could identify itself with orthodox Chinese culture and deny cultural legitimacy to the Mongols.

This political explanation of the rise of *Tao-hsiieh* was prefigured in Li Hsin-ch'uan's 1139 preface to the first history of the movement. He had a broad and practical view of the *Tao-hsiieh* rubric; moreover, he drew attention to the pivotal role of leading chief councilors associated with the group at every crucial juncture. In the late eleventh century, the rise or fall of *Tao-hsiieh* Confucianism depended largely on Ssu-ma Kuang's presence or absence at the emperor's court. During the 1130s, Chao Ting became the vital official. Chao Ju-yü (1140-96) was the one who made the difference during the 1190s. *Tao-hsiieh* flourished when these officials were at court; it encountered extreme difficulties when they fell from power. Although Li's history ended before *Tao-hsiieh* was accorded the status of state orthodoxy, he clearly perceived the dynamics of the group's evolution.

CONCLUSION

The broad perspective of the composition of the *Tao-hsiieh* fellowship from the 1080s through the 1230s has generally been ignored in the accounts of later scholars. Assessing the writings of individuals within the fellowship to supplement Li Hsin-ch'uan's focus in the *Tao ming lu* on the group's interaction with the government, the present study has highlighted his broad view of the movement. Furthermore, in setting *Tao-hsiieh* Confucianism in its historical context, political, social, and intellectual factors have been integrated to

trace its development from the pursuit of the *Tao* by various individuals to a school of thought that won state recognition as Confucian orthodoxy. Such individuals as Ch'en Fu-liang, T'ang Chung-yu, and Yeh Shih, who were only mentioned here, merit much fuller treatment.¹¹⁸ Even more work is needed on the thought of other groups – especially conventional Confucians, the encyclopedists, and those who continued to find the ideas of Wang An-shih and Su Shih attractive. A few scholars in East Asia and the West have been working in recent years on such individuals, thus there is hope that a future overview will someday provide a more complete range of Confucian thinkers in the Southern Sung. Still, the boundaries of the present study have been broader than traditional ones, which concentrate on Chu Hsi's thought alone as orthodoxy.

On the uncertain path that eventually led to orthodoxy, the fellowship was both more difficult to delineate philosophically and more diverse than traditional and modern accounts have implied. During the first period (1127–62), various teachers struggled to keep the faith alive in several scattered locations of the realm. To the degree that any one thinker represented the *Tao-hsüeh* of that period, it was Chang Chiu-ch'eng, but leaders during the subsequent period simply dismissed his learning as too adulterated with Ch'an Buddhism.

During the second period (1163–81), Lü Tsu-ch'ien emerged as the major leader of what was becoming a more clearly defined fellowship and tradition. In temperament and scholarship, Lü was much more pluralistic and accommodating than many of his *Tao-hsüeh* contemporaries, particularly Chu Hsi. The *Tao-hsüeh* fellowship and its relation to the state would have certainly been much different if he had enjoyed a normal life span for a leading intellectual. It was in Chu Hsi's eulogy to Lü that Chu began to assert his claim to leadership openly. During much of the subsequent third period (1182–1202), Chu became increasingly outspoken about his authority to define the succession and tradition of the *Tao*. Many of his contemporaries inside and outside the fellowship continued to reject his authority and to view the group as broader than Chu's own circle. Chu's standing and influence within *Tao-hsüeh* progressed with his seniority and the demise of younger antagonists. Because he died during the official ban against the fellowship, he also took on some of the characteristics of a martyr and a symbol of the fellowship.

¹¹⁸ These figures are slowly attracting more attention: besides the articles cited in footnote 6 above, see particularly Peter K. Bol, "Reconceptualizing the nation in Southern Song statecraft: Some implications of Ye Shi's statecraft learning," in *Ti-san-chieh kuo-chi Han-hsüeh hui-i lun-wen-chi: Li-shih tsu, Ssu-hsiang, cheng-chüan yü she-hui li-liang*, ed. Huang Ko-wu (Taipei, 2002), pp. 33–64; Chou Hsüeh-wu, *Yeh Shui-hsin hsien-sheng nien-p'u* (Taipei, 1988); Chou Meng-chiang *Yeh Shih nien-p'u* (Hang-chou, 1996); Chou Meng-chiang, *Yeh Shih yü Yung-chia hsüeh-p'ai* (Hang-chou, 1992); and Chang I-te, *Yeh Shih p'ing-chuan* (Nanking, 1994).

During the fourth period (1202–79), the one in which *Tao-hsiieh* became officially sanctioned, even some scholar-officials with more diverse ideas and ties to other twelfth-century teachers sought to persuade the emperor to bestow extraordinary honors upon Chu Hsi. His followers operated under his banner even though they shifted the center of gravity within their *Tao-hsiieh* thought away from Chu's preoccupation with the level of speculative philosophy about non-empirical principles and back to the middle level of cultural values and spiritual cultivation. Chu's own work – such as his writings to define the tradition, his commentaries upon the Four Books to establish textual authority for doctrine, and his building community organizations – of course contributed to the success of his school. Nevertheless, without the dedication of his disciples, his school of thought would not have become so prominent so quickly in the thirteenth century. If not for political expediency, the marriage of necessity between *Tao-hsiieh* Confucianism and the state would not have been consummated in 1241.

In the process of becoming orthodoxy, the diversity of twelfth-century *Tao-hsiieh* became eclipsed. By selecting what was considered worth preserving, later Confucians willed a picture of Southern Sung Confucianism in which Chu Hsi stands almost alone and looms larger than life. Closer reading of the extant writings of twelfth-century leaders, such as Chang Chiu-ch'eng and Lü Tsu-ch'ien, should enhance our awareness of alternatives within twelfth-century *Tao-hsiieh* and also enrich our understanding of Chu Hsi's thought itself. Whereas Chu often projected himself as the mean between extreme alternatives presented by other Confucians of his era, knowledge of his interactions with such alternatives would seem to be indispensable to our perception of Chu's own ideas and intellectual development. Moreover, this chapter in the relations between intellectuals and the state provides – for those so inclined – a mirror for historical reflection on that continuing struggle in China.

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INDEX

a-wei 阿魏. *See* asafoetida

Abbasid caliphate, 448

Abbasid court (*Hei-i Ta-shih* 黑衣大食,
“black dressed Tadjik”), 448,
449

Abbasids, 441, 448

academies (*shu-yüan* 書院, *ching-she* 精
舍), 13, 17, 44, 295, 310, 318,
320, 541, 619, 620, 637, 655,
660, 666, 721, 722, 753, 755,
761, 783

academy movement, 309–12

in the mid-Northern Sung, 295

printing at, 552

religious functions of, 312

in the Southern Sung, 309, 312

Accounts Office (*Chang-ssu* 帳司), 153

achat (*ma-nao* 瑪瑙), 516

Adjustment Tribute Policy

(“Adjustment of Tribute from
the Six Southeast Circuits,”

Tung-nan liu-lu chün-shu fa 東南
六路均輸法), 165

administrative assistant. *See* *p'an-kuan* 判
官

administrative-class official (*ching-ch'ao*
kuan 京朝官), 33, 34, 50–1,
470

five tiers of, 69

administrative memorial. *See* *cha-tzu*

administrative regulations (*chih-chih* 職
制) in *Sung hsing-t'ung*, 254

advanced scholar. *See* *chin-shih* 進士

advanced scholar degree. *See* *chin shih*
進士

Advisory Office (Chiang-i ssu 講議司),
131, 132

Afghanistan, 516

Africa, 495, 518

agate (*ma-nao* 瑪瑙). *See also* achat, 181

agricultural production, 338, 341, 354,
359, 385, 425, 679

regional differences, 344

agricultural technologies, 4

Agricultural Treatise (*Nung-shu* 農書),
363

agriculture

encouragement of, 172

land reclamation, 364, 394

state farmlands (*t'un-t'ien* 屯田), 174

Ah Yün 阿雲, case of, 269

Akhbār al-Sīn wa-l-Hind (Notes on
China and India), 443

al-Fustat (old Cairo), 428, 494, 503

Allah al-Akhbār (Allah the greatest),
442

aloe (*lu-hui* 蘆薈), 509, 516

alum (*fan* 矾 or 礬), 190, 519

amber, 444

amberggris (*lung-hsien* 龍涎, “dragon
spittle”), 453, 509, 513

Ambon, 445

American slavery, 535

an 庵. *See* Buddhism: private chapels

- An Ch'üing 安瓊, 282
- An Lu-shan 安祿山 (703-57), 21, 221, 322, 347, 348, 439
- An-chi county 安吉縣 in Hu-chou, Liang-che-hsi, 397
- An-chün, Prince of 安君王, 483
- An-feng-chün 安豐軍 in Huai-nan-hsi, 248
- An-hsi(1) county 安喜縣 in Ting-chou, Ho-pei-hsi, 282, 448
- An-hsi(2) county 安溪縣 in Ch'üan-chou, Fu-chien, 495, 497, 498
- an-hsi-hsiang* 安息香. *See* benzoin or gum Benjamin
- An-nan Protectorate (An-nan tu-hu-fu 安南都護府), 223
- Analects* (*Lun-yü* 論語) by Confucius, 33, 47, 289, 298, 589, 619, 667, 709, 713, 740, 758, 764, 766, 768
- anchorage tax (*po-chiao* 舶腳), 466
- ancient prose. *See* *ku-wen* 古文
- Anhwei 安徽, 361
- Annam 安南, 229, 446, 456, 502, 510, 518
- annual evaluation (k'ao 考), 63, 74
- annual tribute, 182
- approaches to self-cultivation
Fu-chien tradition, 742, 743
Hu-nan methods, 742
- Arab merchants, 442, 444, 508, 513, 518, 519
- Arab ships, 520
- Arab sources, 503
- Arabs (*Ta-shih* 大食), 181, 443, 444, 448, 451, 513, 516, 521
settlements in China, 443
- Araki Toshikazu 荒木敏一, 645
- archive-secretariat (*pien-lü ssu* 編律司)
of counties, 266
- Arikamedu, 447
- aristocracy, comparative notions of, 20, 638
- Armaments Office (*Chün-ch'i suo* 軍器所), 233
- Armaments Section (*Chou-an* 胄案) of the Salt and Iron Office of the State Finance Commission, 153, 233
- armaments storehouses (*chün-hsü k'u* 軍須庫), 236
- armories (*chün-ch'i k'u* 軍器庫), 236
- Armory for Crossbows and Swords (*Chün-ch'i nu-chien k'u* 軍器弩箭庫), 236
- Armory for Uniforms and Armour (*Chün-ch'i i-chia k'u* 軍器衣甲庫), 236
- army
- Annamese Nine Army Model (An-nan chiu-chün fa 安南九軍法), 230
- area generalship (*chiang* 將), 226, 230
- area generalship system (*chiang-ping fa* 將兵法), 226
- army (*chün* 軍), 216, 230
- bowmen (*kung-shou* 弓手), 217, 218, 262
- brave volunteer system (*yung-kan hsiao-yung fa* 勇敢效用法), 244
- cavalry, 235
- companies (*tui* 隊), 226
- company system (*chieh-tui fa* 結隊法), 226
- county defenders (*hsien-wei* 縣尉), 218
- Four Elite Armies (*Shang ssu chün* 上四軍), 216
- frontier defence commands (*fan-chen* 藩鎮), 214
- frontier tribal troops (*fan-ping* 蕃兵), 217, 218
- imperial armies (*chin-chün* 禁軍), 148, 163, 199, 216, 217, 219, 220, 224, 226, 227, 228, 230, 233, 245
- provincially recruited, 217

- Imperial Bodyguard (*Shih-wei ch'in-chün* 侍衛親軍), 214
- imperial guardsmen (*chin-ping* 禁兵), 214
- local militias (*hsiang-ping* 鄉兵), 217, 218
- local troops (*t'u-ping* 土兵), 217, 218
- Metropolitan Cavalry Command (*Ma-ssu* 馬司, *Ma-ssu-chün* 馬司軍), one of the Three Capital Guards, 215, 243
- Metropolitan Infantry Command (*Pu-ssu* 步司), one of the Three Capital Guards, 215, 218
- palace armies (*yü-ch'ien chu-chün* 御前諸軍), 243, 246, 247
- Palace Command (*Tien-ssu* 殿司), one of the Three Capital Guards, 215, 243
- personal army of the emperor (*ch'in-chün* 親軍), 216
- provincial armies or prefectural armies (*hsiang-chün* 廂軍), 148, 217, 219, 220
- stockade troops (*chai-ping* 寨兵), 218
- Three Capital Guards (*San-wei* 三衛), 215, 231, 239, 240, 243, 246, 247
- volunteer system (*hsiao-yung-fa* 效用法), 244
- arrests and escapes (*pu-wang* 捕亡) in *Sung hsing-t'ung*, 255
- arsenals (*chia-chang k'u* 甲仗庫), 236
- asafoetida (dragon's blood *a-wei* 阿魏), 509, 514, 516
- Asia Minor, 508
- assistant chief councilor. *See Ts'an-chih cheng-shih* 參知政事
- audiences, 121
- front hall audience (*cheng-ya* 正衙), 113
- grand audience assembly (*ta ch'ao hui* 大朝會), 113
- grand obeisance (*pai-kuan ta ch'i-chü* 百官大起居), 114
- inner invitation (*nei-yin* 內引), 113
- regular audience (*ch'ang-ch'ao* 常朝), 113
- revolving audience (*chuan-tui* 轉對 or *lun-tui* 輪對), 117
- second sitting in the back hall (*hou-tien tsai-tso* 後殿再座), 114
- supervising the group (*ya-pan* 押班), 98, 114
- ta ch'ao hui* 大朝會. *See* audiences: grand audience assembly
- Australia, 495
- autumn tax (*ch'iu-shui* 秋稅), 158, 159
- avoidance examination for departmental examination (*pieh-shih* 別試 or *pieh-yüan-shih* 別院試), 317
- avoidance examination for qualifying examination (*pieh-t'ou shih* 別頭試, *tieh-shih* 牒試), 317
- Bahrain, 505
- Banda Islands, 445
- Bangka Island, 502
- Barrett, Timothy H., 543, 544
- Bastid, Marianne, 141
- Battle of Talas, 448
- Bayon relief from Angkor Thom, 452
- benevolence. *See* *jen* 仁
- benzoin or gum Benjamin (*an-hsi-hsiang* 安息香 or *chin-yen-hsiang* 金顏香), 509, 512
- Beranang, 502
- Berbera, 518
- Berbera and Somali coast, 513
- Berbera coast, 520
- best of literature, The (*Wen cui* 文粹) 672
- betel nut, 453
- biannual tax. *See* taxes: biannual tax
- Billiton Island, 502
- Birge, Bettine, 580, 586
- Black Killer (*Hei-sha* 黑殺), 605

- black pepper (*hu-chiao* 胡椒), 515
- black-dressed Tadjik (Hei-i Ta-shih 黑衣大食). *See* Abbasid court
- Blossoms from the garden of literature.
See *Wen-yüan ying-hua* 文苑英華, 410
- boats. *See* ships
- Bol, Peter K., xvi, 10–12, 564, 624, 625, 657, 658, 660
- book collecting, 549
- book for relieving famine and reviving the people, A* (*Chiu-huang huo-min shu*), 410
- Book of changes* (*I-ching* 易經), 289, 677, 686, 688, 692, 699, 701, 704, 709, 713, 714, 719, 740, 758, 761, 777
- Book of documents* (*Shu-ching* 書經 or *Shang-shu* 尚書), 28, 36, 37, 289, 686, 704, 709, 713
- Book of notification and verification, The. See* *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa'l-isrāf*
- Book of numbers in nine sections* (*Chiu-chang suan-shu* 九章算術), 529
- Book of poetry, or songs* (*Shih-ching* 詩經), 36, 37, 93, 686, 687, 695, 704, 709, 777
- Book of rites* (*Li-chi* 禮記), 277, 709, 718
- books, overseas trade in, 521
- Borneo (Po-ni 勃泥), 444, 515, 520
- Borneo camphor (*lung-nao-hsiang* 龍腦香), 515
- Bossier, Beverly, 569, 577, 578, 579, 583, 588, 590, 628, 629, 637, 645, 657
- Bow and Arrow Workshop (*Kung-nu tsao-chien yüan* 弓弩造箭院), 233
- Bow Workshop (*Kung-nu yüan* 弓弩院), 233
- Breaker site, 494
- brocade (*chin* 錦), 53, 138
- bronze coins. *See* money: bronze coins, 486, 490, 501, 518
- Brunei, 445
- Buddhism 15, 80, 620, 622, 666, 678, 680, 706, 719, 738, 748, 773, 776, 781. *See* monks
- alleged decline of, 620
- Amitabha Buddha, 555
- bodhisattva Kuan-yin, 555, 611
- bodhisattva Manjusri, 599
- Buddhist monasteries, 15, 96
- Buddhist sculpture, 496
- Buddhist sects, 15
- Buddhist shrines, 15
- Buddhist values, 32
- burning spirit money, 530
- canons, 94
- certification of monks, 531
- Ch'an 禪 literati, 16, 541, 737
- Ch'an 禪 monks, 735
- Ch'an 禪 school, 309, 617, 619, 620, 661, 734, 736, 739, 776, 780, 789
- Confucian critiques of, 740
- Confucian–Buddhist synthesis, 756
- enthusiasm for, 739
- hostility towards, 736, 737
- Hui-ch'ang 會昌 persecution, 607
- ideas and practices, 16
- images, 532
- influence of, 620
- Japanese monk, 406, 498
- manuscript production, 550
- monasteries, 361, 539, 603, 612, 753
- monasteries as printers, 552
- monks, 361, 411, 458, 608
- nuns, 585
- origins of gods, 611
- pilgrims, 424
- practitioners, 616
- printed canon, 547
- printed scriptures, 545
- printing, 544

- private chapels (*an* 庵) and merit
 cloisters, 600
 recitations, 601
 rituals for the dead, 603
 role of gold and copper in, 485
sangha, 597
 schools, 295
 scriptures, 288, 438, 521, 552, 553
 statues, 502
 subordination to Taoism, 607
 T'ang persecutions, 596
 and tea drinking in Japan, 497
 teachers, 734
 temples, 203, 425, 438, 503, 573,
 613, 614, 616, 619, 647, 670
 texts, 670
 tradition, 680
 vows, 602
- Buddhist schools, 541
 Ch'an 禪, 309, 542, 597, 617, 661,
 734, 736, 739, 776, 780, 789
 Hua-yen 華嚴, 598
 Lin-chi 臨濟 school of Ch'an, 597
 Pure Land (*Ching-t'u* 淨土), 533, 601
 T'ien-t'ai 天台, 601
 Ts'ao-tung 曹洞 school of Chan, 597
- Buddhist temples
 as hostels in the capital, 315
- Bureau for the Implementation of Fiscal
 Regulations. *See* Finance
 Planning Commission
- Bureau of General Accounts (Tu-chih
 ssu 度支司), 75
- Bureau of Military Affairs. *See* Military
 Affairs Commission
- Bureau of Operations (*Chih-fang* 職方),
 539
- Bureau of Personnel Evaluation
 (*Shen-kuan yüan* 審官院), 63
- Bureau of Policy Criticism (*Chien-yüan*
 諫院), 30, 31, 38, 103, 104-5,
 106, 107, 108, 110, 137
- bureaus of the two controller-generals
 (*liang ts'ui t'ing* 兩倅廳), 467
- Burma, 502
- Bursary (*Liang-liao yüan* 糧料院), 146
- Byzantium, 519
- cadastral survey (*ching-chieh* 經界), 538
- Cambodia (Chen-la 真臘), 430, 442,
 500, 504, 510, 513, 516, 518
- Khmer pottery sites, 496
- camphor (nao-tzu 腦子), 509, 515
- Canton. *See* Kuang-chow
- capital (*tsu-pen* 資本), 528
- cardamoms, 509
- carnelian, 475
- Celebes Sea, 445
- Celestial Treasury, 530
- Censorate (*Yü-shih t'ai* 御史臺), 30, 31,
 38, 49, 60, 74, 98, 103, 106,
 107, 108, 110, 111, 112, 122,
 133, 137, 143, 251, 252
- Attendant Censor (*shih yü-shih* 侍御
 史), 104
- Headquarters Bureau (T'ai-yüan 臺
 院), 104
- history and organization of, 103-4
- Investigating Censors (*Chien-ch'a
 yü-shih* 監察御史), 104
- Investigation Bureau (*Ch'a-yüan* 察
 院), 104
- Palace Bureau (*Tien-yüan* 殿院), 104
- Palace Censors (*Tien-chung shih yü-shih*
 殿中侍御史), 104
- procedures of, 106-11
- Vice Censor-in-chief (*Yü-shih
 chung-ch'eng* 御史中丞), 104
- Census Bureau (*Hu-pu-si* 戶部司), 145,
 153
- Central Asia, 506, 523
- Central Plain. *See* *Chung-yüan* 中原
- centrality or inner equilibrium. *See* *chung
 中*
- ceramics, 373, 427, 493
 bluish-greenish-white wares
 (*ying-ch'ing* 影青), 497, 498,
 499

ceramics (*cont.*)

celadon wares (*ch'ing-tz'u* 青瓷),

497

Chien-yang 建陽 ware, 497

Ching-te-chen 旌德真 kilns, 376,

427, 428, 429, 464, 493, 494,

495, 499

Ching-te-chen 旌德真 wares, 369,

495, 496, 497, 498

dark-colored earthenwares (*tsa-se-t'ao*

雜色陶), 497

growth of ceramics industry, 532

Kaolin clays (*Kao-ling-t'u* 高岭土),

464, 493, 494

Lung-ch'üan 龍泉 kilns, 464,

493

Lung-ch'üan 龍泉 wares, 368, 427,

428, 430, 454, 495, 496, 497,

498

porcelain, 369, 444, 460, 503,

532

statistics on kiln numbers, 374

Ting-chou 定州 wares, 428, 499

white wares (*pai-tz'u* 白瓷), 497

white-glazed porcelain (*pai-tz'u* 白瓷), 368

certificates for maritime traders, 469

for permission to sail overseas

(*kung-p'ing* 公憑 or *kung-chü* 公據), 469

for permission to trade at locations in

China (*lu-yin* 路引, *bui-yin* 回引 and *ti-t'ou-yin* 地頭引), 469

for the sale of particular commodities,

469

cha-tzu 劄子 (administrative memorial),

44

cha-wei 詐偽. *See* deceptions and frauds

ch'a 茶. *See* tea

Ch'a-yüan 察院. *See* Censorate:

Investigation Bureau

Chaffee, John, xvii, 1, 9, 10, 12, 310,

623, 624, 625, 644, 656

chai 塞. *See* forts; stockade

chai-ping 寨兵. *See* army: stockade troops

ch'ai-ch'ien 差遣 (commissions,

functional positions), 49

ch'ai-i 差役. *See* labor service:

requisitioned labor service

ch'ai-k'o 差科. *See* taxes: obligatory sale of goods

Champa (Chan-ch'eng 占城), 4, 444,

507, 510, 514, 523

Champa rice, 4, 172, 360, 363, 364,

368, 385, 394, 419, 421

Chan, Wing-tsit (Ch'en Jung-chieh 陳榮捷), 745

Chan-ch'eng 占城. *See* Champa

ch'an 鎚. *See* farm tools: small, sharp share

Ch'an-yen fa 產鹽法. *See* salt policies: Family Wealth Salt Policy

Chancellery (*Men-hsia sheng* 門下省), 30, 98

Chang Chien 張監, 488

Chang Chiu-ch'eng 張九成

(1092-1159), 105, 733, 736,

737, 739, 740, 756, 757, 773,

775, 789, 790

Chang Chü-cheng 張居正 (1525-82), 166

Chang Chün¹ 張俊 (1086-1154), 240, 243

Chang Chün² 張浚 (1096-1164), 246, 741

Chang Hsiu-min 張秀民, 549

Chang Mu 張睦, 464

Chang Shang-ying 張商英

(1043-1122), 598

Chang Shen-lo 張神洛, 282

Chang Shih 張栻 (1133-80), 309, 513,

648, 740, 741, 743, 748, 750,

755, 758, 759, 780, 788

and Chu Hsi, 741

Chang Shih-nan 張世南 (d. after 1230), 450, 513

Chang Shou-shen, 605

Chang Sun 張遜, 465

- Chang Tsai 張載 (1020-77), 11, 701, 706, 716, 719, 723, 725, 744, 755, 756, 757, 761, 784, 786, 788
- Chang Tse-tuan 張擇端 (1085-1145), 381
- Chang Tun 章惇 (1035-1105), 91, 120, 128, 129, 134
- Chang Yung 張詠 (946-1015), 673
- chang-che* 長者 (charitable elders), 646
- Chang-chou 漳州 in Fu-chien circuit, 120, 415, 420, 433, 483, 647, 648, 783
- chang-kuan* 長官. *See* senior officials
- Chang-ssu* 帳司. *See* Accounts Office
- ch'ang* 場 (yards), 235
- Ch'ang-an 長安 in Yung-hsing-chün circuit, 200, 321, 324, 381, 403, 545
- ch'ang-ch'ao* 常朝. *See* audiences: regular audience
- Ch'ang-chiang 長江. *See* Yangtze River
- Ch'ang-chou 常州 in Liang-che-hsi circuit, 341, 345, 388, 393, 417, 420, 422, 423
- Ch'ang-chou county 長洲縣 in Su-chou, Liang-che-hsi, 341, 343
- ch'ang-fu* 常賦 (regular agricultural taxes), 163
- Ch'ang-lo county 長樂縣 in Fu-chou, Fu-chien, 404
- ch'ang-ming ya-ch'ien* 長名衙前. *See* volunteer office servicemen
- ch'ang-p'ing ts'ang* 常平倉. *See* granaries: price-regulating granaries
- Ch'ang-sha 長沙, 401, 442
- Ch'ang-shu county 常熟縣 in Su-chou, Liang-che-hsi, 395, 404, 423, 424
- ch'ang-wu* 場務 (monopoly or commercial tax installations), 148
- ch'ang-yin* 長引. *See* official transit permits
- Chao Ch'ung-tu 趙重度 (1175-1230), 483
- Chao Hsü. *See* Shen-tsung
- Chao I 趙翼 (1727-1814), 76, 78
- Chao Ju-kua 趙汝适 (1170-1231), 449, 508, 510, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 520, 521
- Chao Ju-yü 趙汝愚 (1140-96), 91, 788
- Chao Pien 趙抃 (1008-84), 111
- Chao Pu-hsi 趙不熄 (fl. 1213), 483
- Chao P'u 趙普 (922-92), 117, 142
- Chao Shih-hsüeh 趙士雪 (1108-62), 483
- Chao Shih-k'an 趙士衍 (fl. 1163-4), 483
- Chao Shu-hsiang 趙叔向, 91
- Chao Ting 趙鼎 (1085-1147), 788
- Chao Yen-hou 趙彥侯 (c. 1190s-1230s), 483
- Chao-chou 趙州 in Ho-pei-hsi circuit, 358
- chao-lai Man-shang* 招來蠻商. *See* southern barbarian merchants
- chao-yü* 詔獄. *See* mandated trial
- ch'ao* 朝 (audience), 112
- ch'ao* 鈔 (vouchers). *See also* *yin* 引, 185
- Ch'ao I-tao 晁以道 (Courtesy name for Ch'ao Yüeh-chih 晁說之, 1059-1129), 562
- Ch'ao Yüeh-chih 晁說之 (1059-1129), 123
- Ch'ao-chou 潮州 in Kuang-nan-tung, 498
- ch'ao-hui* 朝會. *See* court audience or morning audience
- ch'ao-kung* 朝貢. *See* annual tribute
- ch'ao-kung mao-i* 朝貢貿易. *See* tribute trade
- ch'ao-t'ing* 朝廷 (imperial court), 87
- ch'ao-yen fa* 鈔鹽法. *See* salt distribution by private merchants for south China
- charitable foundations (*i-ch'an* 義產), 172

- charitable service (*i-i* 義役), 172
- Chaves, Jonathan, 573
- che-chung fa* 折中法 (system of salt vouchers provided to merchants in exchange for delivered provisions), 185
- che-k'o* 折科, *che-pien* 折變 (commutation of grain taxes into cash or other goods), 161
- Che-tsung 哲宗 (Chao Hsü 趙煦, 1077-1100, r. 1085-1100), 81, 91, 94, 111, 115, 155, 230, 232, 454, 477, 716
- Che-yü kuei-chien* 折獄龜鑑. *See* *Mirror for deciding cases*
- Chekiang, 496, 507, 669, 721, 759, 763, 765
- ch'e-ch'ü* 車渠. *See* giant clams
- chen* 鎮 (market town). *See* market towns
- Chen Te-hsiu 真德秀 (1178-1235), 157, 415, 453, 458, 483, 490, 647, 648, 785, 786, 787
- chen-chiang* 鎮將. *See* garrison commander
- Chen-chiang fu 鎮江府 (Jun-chou 潤州) in Liang-che-hsi, 243, 400, 406, 417, 423
- Chen-chou 真州 in Huai-nan-tung, 202, 369, 400
- chen-chu* 真珠. *See* pearls
- chen-fu shih* 鎮撫使. *See* military commissioners in the Southern Sung
- Chen-jung commandery 鎮戎軍, 174
- Chen-la 真蠟. *See* Cambodia
- Chen-tsung 真宗 (968-1022, r. 997-1022). *See also* Chao Heng, 15, 23, 30, 51, 55, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86, 88, 91, 94, 96, 103, 104, 107, 117, 119, 146, 147, 148, 166, 172, 193, 201, 215, 216, 220, 223, 224, 225, 226, 480, 551, 604, 605, 606, 670, 673
- Chen-wu 真武 (or Hsüan-wu 玄武), 605, 616
- Chen-wu Army 振武軍, 217
- ch'en* 臣 (vassal), 246, 449
- Ch'en 陳 surname, 554
- Ch'en An-hsing 陳安行, 555
- Ch'en Ch'eng 陳偁 (1015-86), 477
- Ch'en Ch'un 陳淳 (1159-1223), 745, 783, 785
- Ch'en Ching 陳敬, 509
- Ch'en Fu 陳敷 (b. 1076), 370
- Ch'en Fu-liang 陳傅良 (1137-1203), 72, 415, 723, 785, 789
- Ch'en Hsiang 陳襄 (1017-80), 579, 585
- Ch'en Kou 陳遘 (*tsu* Heng-po 亨伯, 1090-1127), 162
- Ch'en Kuan 陳瓘 (1057 or 1060-1124), 712
- Ch'en Kung-fu 陳公輔 (1077-1142), 132, 732, 733
- Ch'en Liang 陳亮 (1143-94), 36, 42, 138, 649, 723, 724, 758, 760, 763, 769, 772, 777, 784, 785 and Chu Hsi, 741, 763
- Ch'en Mi 陳宓 (1171-1230), 785
- Ch'en Shen-fu 陳愼夫 (or Ch'en Tun-fu 陳敦夫?, 1061 *chin-shih*), 477
- Ch'en Sheng-chih 陳升之 (1011-79), 41, 45
- Ch'en Tsao 陳造 (1133-1203), 582
- Ch'en Tung 陳東 (1086-1127), 304, 305
- ch'en-hsiang* 沈香. *See* gharuwood or "sinking aroma"
- Cheng Ho 鄭和 (1371-c. 1435), 523
- Cheng K'o 鄭克 (b. 1081), 259
- Cheng meng* 正蒙. *See* *Correcting youthful ignorance*
- Cheng-chou 鄭州 in Ching-hsi-pei, 355
- Cheng-shih-t'ang 政事堂 (Hall of Administration). *See* Hall of Administration

- cheng-shui* 正稅 (regular tax), 158
- cheng-ya* 正衙. *See* audiences: front hall audience
- ch'eng* 誠 (sincerity, authenticity, or integrity), 700
- Ch'eng brothers (Ch'eng Hao 程顥 and Ch'eng I 程頤), 536, 701, 708, 711, 723, 739, 740, 742, 744, 746, 755, 757, 761, 762, 767, 778, 783
- disciples of, 739
- Ch'eng Hao 程顥 (1032-1085), 11, 309, 669, 693, 712, 716, 717, 719, 720, 732, 734, 743, 747, 748, 750, 755, 758, 784
- Ch'eng hsiieh* 程學. *See* Ch'eng learning
- Ch'eng I 程頤 (1033-1107), 10, 11, 309, 668, 669, 670, 693, 708, 712, 714, 716, 719, 720, 726, 728, 729, 732, 733, 734, 736, 740, 742, 743, 744, 746, 748, 758, 761, 766, 769, 784
- Ch'eng learning (*Ch'eng hsiieh* 程學), 716-21, 732
- Ch'eng-tu prefecture 成都府 in Ch'eng-tu-fu circuit, 72, 210, 314, 328, 334, 346, 371, 386, 403, 421, 431, 432, 545, 547, 550
- Cherniack, Susan, 562, 563, 564
- chi* 饑. *See* famine
- chi pi kuan nai ch'ou-chieh ping shou-shui* 既畢官乃抽解併收稅 (levy of (regular) taxes), 466
- Chi-chou 吉州 in Chiang-nan-hsi, 406, 412, 432
- chi-chu* 集注 (placement assemblies for executor officials), 70
- chi-i*. *See* consultative assemblies
- chi-k'ou mai-yen fa* 計口買鹽法. *See* salt policies: Purchase by Number of Individuals Salt Policy
- Chi-ku lu* 稽古錄. *See* Record of examining the past
- chi-lu-k'uan* 寄祿官 (stipendiary office, titular office, titular rank, rank title). *See also* *chieh-kuan* 階官, 8, 59
- chi-pei* 吉貝 (ancient name for cotton), 508
- chi-shih chung* 給事中 (supervising secretary), 30
- Chi-su fang* 機速房. *See* Office for Emergencies
- chi-ti* 及第 (passed the palace examination with distinction), 315
- Chi-nan 濟南, 557
- Ch'i 齊 regime (1130-37), 242
- ch'i* 氣 (matter and energy or material force that constituted all things, psychophysical substance, substance-energy), 571, 618, 698, 716, 717, 718
- Chang Tsai's conception of, 706
- Ch'i Chung-fu 齊仲甫, 570
- ch'i-chang* 耆長 (village elder), 262
- Ch'i-chou Sea 七洲洋, 445
- ch'i-fen tseng-shui ch'ien* 七分曾稅錢. *See* taxes: surcharge or surtax
- ch'i-feng* 祈風 (praying for advantageous winds), 469
- ch'i-lin-chieh* 麒麟竭. *See* unicorn gutta
- Ch'i-sung 契嵩 (1007-72), 680
- chia hsiieh-chieh* 假血竭. *See* false dragon's blood
- Chia Ssu-tao 賈似道 (1213-75), 128, 132, 167
- Chia Tan 賈耽 (710-85), 447, 448
- Chia, Lucile, 549, 652
- chia-chang k'u* 甲仗庫. *See* arsenals
- Chia-hsing county 嘉興縣 in Hsiu-chou, Liang-che-hsi, 368
- Chia-kang shui-chün* 駕綱水軍. *See* Convoy Escort Squadron
- chia-lo-p'o-chieh* 迦羅婆劫 (alternate name for cotton), 508

- chia-t'ai* 加抬. *See* incentive payments
- Chia-ting county 嘉定縣 in Su-chou,
Liang-che-hsi circuit, 476
- chia-yeh ch'ien* 家業錢. *See* taxes: tax on
urban rent
- chia-yeh wu-li* 家業物力. *See* family
wealth
- chiang* 將. *See* army: area generalship
- Chiang Kung-wang 江公望 (fl. 1101),
756
- Chiang-chou 江州 in Chiang-nan-hsi,
243, 379, 401, 534
- Chiang-hsi school 江西學, 528
- Chiang-hsia Temple 江夏寺, 475
- Chiang-hu school 江湖學, 528
- Chiang-i ssu* 講議司. *See* Advisory Office
- Chiang-k'ou 江口, 423
- Chiang-ling-fu 江陵府 in Ching-hu-pei
circuit. *See also* Ching-nan-fu 荊
南府, 234
- Chiang-nan-hsi circuit 江南西路, 160,
346, 350, 354, 361, 363, 386,
388, 390, 392, 393, 394, 401,
406, 410, 412, 421, 427, 429,
430, 432, 534, 535, 538, 554,
556, 560, 561, 607, 608, 612,
622, 649, 669, 773, 783
- Chiang-nan-tung circuit 江南東路,
159, 160, 337, 345, 346, 349,
354, 363, 365, 371, 386, 394,
396, 398, 408, 410, 412, 415,
421, 422, 428, 429, 430, 431,
753
- chiang-ping fa* 將兵法. *See* army: area
generalship system
- Chiang-tso chien* 將作監. *See* Directorate
for the Palace Buildings
- Chiang-yin-chün 江陰軍 in Liang-che,
478
- ch'iang-kan jo-chih* 強幹弱枝
(strengthen the trunk and
weaken the branches),
29
- chiaio* 醮. *See* offering
- chiaio-ch'ao* 交鈔. *See* exchange vouchers
- Chiao-chih 交趾, 223, 442, 475
- Chiao-chou Bay 膠州灣, 477
- Chiao-hsi 膠西, battle of, 238, 245
- Chiao-hsi county 膠西縣 in Mi-chou,
Ching-tung-tung, 477
- chiaio-bua* 教化. *See* transform society
through instruction
- chiaio-buan* 繳還 (surrender and return),
30
- chiaio-kuan* 教官. *See* teaching officials
- Chiao-shan 焦山, battle of, 249
- chiaio-shou* 教授. *See* preceptors
- chiaio-tzu* 交子. *See also* money: paper
currency
certificates of deposit, 194, 210
- chiaio-tzu p'u* 交子鋪. *See* money:
certificates of deposit shops
- Chiao-tzu wu* 交子務. *See* Paper Money
Office
- Ch'iao Hsing-chien 喬行簡
(1156-1241), 787
- chief administration officer (*tu-pu-shu* 都
部署), 225
- chief councilors (*tsai-hsiang* 宰相), 8, 9,
16, 68, 97, 104, 105, 109, 110,
111, 125, 126, 127-38, 146,
216, 225, 243, 477
- nefarious ministers (*chien-ch'en* 姦臣),
128
- recruitment privileges of, 55
- sole councilor (*tu-hsiang* 獨相),
127
- weighted minister (*ch'üan-ch'en* 權臣),
127
- chief manufactories (*tu-tso yüan* 都作
院), 234
- chieb* 界 (fixed periods), 210
- chieb* 階 (rank), 59
- chieb-chi* 節級. *See* clerks: county clerks
- chieb-chi fa* 階級法. *See* military: ranking
system
- Chieh-chou 解州 in Yung-hsing-chün,
184, 185

- chieh-kuan* 階官 (titular office, titular rank, rank title), 60, 143, 287.
 See also *chi-lu-k'uan* 寄祿官
- chieh-shih* 解試. See prefectural examinations
- chieh-tu-shih* 節度使 (military commissioners, provincial military governors, regional commandants), 51, 143, 262, 622
- chieh-tui fa* 結隊法. See army: company system
- Chien-ch'a yü-shih* 監察御史. See Censorate: Investigating Censors
- Chien-ch'ang commandery 建昌軍 in Chiang-nan-hsi, 412
- chien-ch'en* 姦臣. See chief councilors: nefarious ministers
- chien-cheng* 檢正. See document processing: examiner
- Chien-chou 建州 (Chien-ning fu 建寧府) in Fu-chien, 368, 498
- chien-chou* 監州 (vice prefect or prefectural supervisor), 147. See also *t'ung-p'an* 通判
- chien-chü* 薦舉 (sponsored endorsements, recommendations), 73
- chien-chuang* 監莊. See estate manager
- chien-fa kuan* 檢法官. See law searching officials
- Chien-k'ang-fu 建康府 (Chiang-ning-fu 江寧府) in Chiang-nan-tung, 234, 240, 243, 365, 406, 419, 421, 426
- chien-shu* 簽書 (endorsement), 147
- chien-ssu* 監司 (surveillance agencies), 144
- chien-tang kuan* 監當官 (state monopoly agents), 148
- chien-tuan kuan* 監斷官. See officials who search and sentence
- Chien-yang county 建陽縣 in Chien-chou, Fu-chien, 368
- Chien-yen i-lai hsi-nien yao-lu* 建炎一來繫年要錄 (*Chronological record of important events since 1127*), 25
- chien-yüan* 諫院. See Bureau of Policy Criticism
- Ch'ien Mu 錢穆 (1895–1990), 748
- ch'ien-chin* 錢禁. See money: coin prohibitions
- Ch'ien-hsü* 潛虛. See Hidden void
- ch'ien-huang* 錢荒 (coin famine), 209
- Ch'ien-shan county 鉛山縣 in Hsin-chou, Chiang-nan-tung, 408
- Ch'ien-t'ang River 錢塘江, 406
- ch'ien-yin* 錢引. See money: cash vouchers
- chih kung-chü* 知貢舉. See examination administrator
- chih-cheng kuan* 執政官. See executive officials
- chih-chih* 職制. See administrative regulations
- Chih-chih san-ssu t'iao-li ssu* 制置三司條例司 (Finance Planning Commission). See Finance Planning Commission
- chih-chih shih* 制置使. See military commissioner (*chih-chih shih*)
- Chih-ch'ih yüan* 制敕院. See Secretariat-Chancellery: Bureau of Edicts (*Chih-ch'ih yüan* 制敕院)
- chih-chou* 知州. See prefects
- chih-fa* 止法 (laws of halt), 64
- chih-fu* 治府. See prefectural administrator
- chih-hsien* 知縣. See county magistrate
- chih-hui* 指揮 (commandery – army unit), 216
- chih-i* 支移, *chih-i chiao-ch'ien* 支移腳錢. See transport fee
- chih-li* 至理 (ultimate pattern), 688
- chih-lu* 知錄. See circuit judicial intendant

- chib-nan chen* 指南針 (south pointing needle). *See* compass
- chib-ta fa* 直達法 (requirement that southern circuits ship their taxes directly to the capital), 202
- chib-t'ien* 職田. *See* office fields
- chib-tsou* 執奏. *See* document processing: retained memorial
- Chih-yen 知言. *See* Understanding of words
- Chih-yüan 智圓 (976–1022), 674
- ch'ib* 敕 (edicts, associated penalties), 250, 255, 257, 258
- ch'ib-ch'i* 赤契. *See* red contracts
- Ch'ih-chou 池州 in Chiang-nan-tung, 243
- Chin 晉 (ca. 900–376 BC), 691, 692
- Chin 金 (Jurchen) dynasty (1115–1234), 2, 18, 28, 181, 190, 232, 305, 440, 478, 510, 666, 708, 733
- Sung trade with, 183
- Sung wars with, 458, 738, 741, 788
- chin hsing* 盡性 (to realize one's own nature), 719
- Chin-chiang county 晉江縣 in Ch'üan-chou, Fu-chien, 415, 497, 498
- Chin-chou 金州 in Li-chou circuit, 243
- chin-chün* 禁軍. *See* army: imperial armies
- Chin-hua county 金華縣 in Wu-chou, Liang-che-tung, 753, 760
- Chin-ling 金陵, 220
- chin-na* 進納. *See* financial contribution
- chin-ping* 禁兵. *See* army: imperial guardsmen
- Chin-pu* 金部. *See* Ministry of Revenue: Treasury Bureau
- chin-shih* 進士 (advanced scholar or presented scholar degree), 9, 34, 44, 57, 90, 288, 294, 295, 304, 314, 316, 319, 665, 671, 706, 709, 732, 733, 750, 772, 773, 786
- candidates, 299
- curriculum for, 289
- degrees and recipients, numbers given 288
- division into two sub-degrees, 300
- list of 1256, 313
- prefectural quotas for, 292
- reordering by the Ch'ing-li reforms, 294
- in T'ang examinations, 34
- Chin-ssu lu* 近思錄. *See* Reflections on things at hand
- chin-ti* 禁地 (prohibition zones for wine sales), 188
- chin-yen fa* 禁鹽法. *See* salt monopoly
- chin-yen-hsiang* 金顏香. *See* benzoin or gum Benjamin
- Ch'in 秦 dynasty (221–206 BC), 687, 695
- Ch'in Chiu-shao 秦九韶 (1202–61), 405
- Ch'in Kuei 秦檜 (1090–1155), 2, 8, 37, 86, 96, 115, 117, 128, 133, 134, 135, 136, 242, 306, 636, 733, 735, 737, 752, 760
- Ch'in-chou 秦州 in Ch'in-feng circuit, 202
- ch'in-chieh ch'ien 侵街錢. *See* street encroachment tax
- ch'in-chün* 親軍. *See* army: personal army of the emperor
- Ch'in-feng circuit 秦鳳路, 144, 227, 273, 336, 339, 358, 390
- Ch'in-ling Mountains 秦嶺山, 327
- ch'in-min kuan* 親民官 (officials who cherish people), 149
- Ch'in-tsung 欽宗 (Chao Huan 趙桓, 1100–61, r. 1125–7), 81, 90, 112
- China fir (*shan* 杉), 451
- Chinese accounts of maritime foreigners, 447
- ching* 敬 (inner mental attentiveness), 719

- ching* 經 (standard), 766
- ching chih shih* 經制使 (pacification commissioner), 72
- ching shih-wu* 經世務 (correcting the problems of the age), 688
- ching shu* 經術 (methods from the Classics), 688
- ching-ch'ao kuan* 京朝官. *See* administrative class officials
- ching-chieh* 經界. *See* cadastral survey
- ching-chieh fa* 經界法. *See* land survey measure
- ching-chih ch'ien* 經制錢 (pacification cash), 162
- ching-chih shih* 經制使. *See* pacification commissioner
- Ching-chih ssu* 經制司. *See* Pacification Cash Office
- Ching-fu fang* 經撫房. *See* Frontier Defense Office
- Ching-hsi circuit 京西路, 156, 242, 248, 273, 344
- Ching-hsi-pei circuit 京西北路, 382
- Ching-hu-nan circuit 荊湖南路, 339, 345, 346, 393, 413, 416, 421, 429, 430, 534, 535, 644, 735
food shortages, 414
- Ching-hu-pei circuit 荊湖北路, 248, 345, 346, 349, 354, 360, 403, 413, 416, 429, 433, 535
food shortages, 414
- Ching-k'ou ch'i-chiu chuan* 京口耆舊傳, 503
- ching-lieh an-fu shih* 經略安撫使. *See* military commissioner
- Ching-nan-fu 荊南府 in Ching-hu-pei, 243
- ching-shih* 經使, (standard positions), 70
- Ching-te-chen. *See* ceramics:
Ching-te-chen
- ching-tsung chih ch'ien* 經聰制錢 (account for both pacification cash and finance supervision cash), 163
- Ching-tung circuit 京東路, 227, 272, 337, 339, 340, 356, 370, 371, 372, 373, 377, 380, 390, 474
- Ching-tung-tung circuit 京東東路, 382
- Ching-yen kuan* 經筵官. *See* Classics Mat lecturers
- Ching-yüan circuit or military district 涇原路, 144, 224, 227
- Ch'ing 清 dynasty (1616–1912), xvii, 16, 17, 19, 21, 435, 436, 585, 636, 649, 782
community compact in, 542
local elites in, 659
revenue collections in, 211
- ch'ing* 頃 (fourteen acres of land), 76, 174
- ch'ing* 青 ware, 496
- Ch'ing-li reforms (*Ch'ing-li hsin-cheng* 慶曆新政), 293, 298, 674, 675, 682, 689, 695
- Ch'ing-lung-chen 青龍鎮 (T'ung-hui-chen 通惠鎮) in Hua-ting county, Hsiu-chou, Liang-che, 424
- ch'ing-mai ch'i-chih* 請買契紙 (transaction cost for real estate purchases), 197
- Ch'ing-miao fa* 青苗法. *See* New Policies: Green Sprouts Policy or Farming Loans Policy
- Ch'ing-ming chi*. *See* *Ming-kung shu-p'an*
- Ch'ing-ming chi* 名公書判清明集
- Ch'ing-ming shang-bo t'u* 清明上河圖 (*Going up the river during the spring festival*), 79, 381
- ch'ing-pai* 青白 ware, 495, 496
- ch'ing-shou* 清受. *See* salaries of officials: base salary (*ch'ing-shou* 清受, literally "pure receipts")
- ch'ing-tz'u* 青瓷. *See* ceramics: celadon wares
- Ch'ing-yüan ch'ih ling ko shih* 慶元敕令格式, 258

- Ch'ing-yüan fu 慶元府. *See* Ming-chou in Liang-che-tung
- Ch'ing-yüan t'iao-fa shih-lei* 慶元條法事類. *See* *Classified legal clauses effective in the Ch'ing-yüan era*
- Chiu wu-tai shih* 舊五代史. *See* *History of the Five Dynasties*
- Chiu-ching* 九經. *See* Nine Classics
- Chiu-chou* 九州. *See* Nine Provinces
- chiu-ho huo-pan* 糾合火伴. *See* commercial partnerships: associations of partners
- Chiu-jih-shan 九日山. *See* Nine-days Mountain
- chiu-k'ü* 廐庫. *See* government stables and treasuries
- chiu-liang chin-chün* 就糧禁軍 ("imperial armies close to their region of provisioning" or provincially recruited imperial armies), 217
- ch'iu-liang* 秋糧 (autumn grain). *See* autumn tax
- ch'iu-miao* 秋苗 (autumn shoots). *See* autumn tax
- ch'iu-shui* 秋稅. *See* autumn tax
- ch'iu-yen* 求言, 122 (seeking speakers)
- Ch'üing-chou Straits 瓊州海峽, 445
- Chola Kingdom, 503
- Cholas, 503
- chou* 州. *See* prefectures
- Chou Ch'ing-li 周慶立, 470
- Chou Ch'ü-fei 周去非 (d. after 1178), 449, 510
- Chou 周 dynasty (1046–256 BC), 36, 112, 670, 692, 784
- Chou Hsing-chi 周行己 (1067–1125), 723
- Chou I pen-i* 周易本意 (*Chou* dynasty *Book of changes*), 740
- Chou Mi 周密 (1232–98), 316, 555
- Chou Nan 周南 (1159–1213), 417
- Chou Pi-ta 周必大 (1126–1204), 65, 649
- Chou Tun-i 周敦頤 (1017–73), 11, 699, 706, 743, 755, 757, 777, 779, 784, 788
- Chou-an* 冑案. *See* Armaments Section of the Salt and Iron Monopoly Bureau
- chou-chün chien ling* 州潛兼領 (prefects with concurrent duties), 480
- chou-hsüeh* 州學. *See* prefectural schools
- Chou-li*. *See* *Rites of the Chou*
- chou-yüan* 州院. *See* prefectural court
- ch'ou i fen* 抽一分 (took one part), 467
- ch'ou-chieh* 抽解 (commodity tax), 466
- ch'ou-mai* 抽買. *See* harmonious purchase
- Christians, 443
- Chronicles of Tso*. *See* *Tso Chuan* 左傳
- Chronological charts* (*Li-nien t'u* 歷年圖), 690, 691
- chu* 主 (master), 449
- Chu Chen 朱震 (1072–1138), 732, 778
- Chu Chuan-yü 朱傳譽, 553
- Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130–1200), 10, 12, 17, 34, 45, 58, 79, 80, 120, 122, 129, 307, 309, 311, 312, 313, 407, 536, 541, 563, 565, 567, 574, 579, 583, 588, 589, 618, 620, 635, 636, 648, 652, 656, 658, 660, 661, 668, 669, 701, 714, 721, 723, 729, 730, 731, 732, 734, 737, 738, 739, 740, 750, 759, 760, 761, 782, 784, 785, 788, 789, 790
- and Ch'en Liang, 763
- and Chang Shih, 741
- and Lu Chiu-yüan, 772
- and Lü Tsu-ch'ien, 750
- posthumous honors, 787, 790
- program for local society, 541
- religious program, 618
- thought as orthodoxy, 782
- on a wine tax policy, 189
- Chu ju ming-tao chi* 諸儒鳴道集. *See* *Writings by various Confucians for propagating the Tao*

- Chu Sheng-fei 朱勝非 (1082–1144), 42
 Chu Sung 朱松 (1097–1143), 739
 Chu Te-yu 朱德由 (d. 1107), 600
 Chu Tz'u 朱泚 (742–784), 448
 Chu Yü 朱彧 (c. 1075–after 1119), 449, 493
Chu-fan chih 諸蕃志, 449, 502, 503, 512, 516, 518
 Chu-hsien chen 朱仙鎮 (in modern Honan province), 242
chu-hu 主戶 (resident households), 162
chu-i ch'ien 助役錢. *See* supplementary service tax
chu-k'o 諸科 (various [fields] degrees), 300
 facilitated degrees for, 290
 numbers given, 288
 prefectural quotas for, 292
chu-kuan 主觀 (subjective), 439
chu-pu 主簿. *See* county registrars
chu-shuai 主帥. *See* field commanders
chu-shui 住稅. *See* taxes: sales tax
 Ch'u 楚 (1127) regime, 554
 Ch'u-chou 楚州 in Huai-nan-tung, 202
 Ch'u-chou 處州 in Liang-che-tung, 369
ch'u-ming 除名 (disenrolled), 50
ch'u-shen 出身 (formally qualified in the palace examinations). *See also* *yu ch'u-shen* 有出身, 315
chü-chu 舉主 (sponsorship endorsements for promotions), 47
chü-jen 舉人 or *te-chieh-jen* 得解人 (selected men), 291, 292, 294, 296, 297
 geographical representation of, 297, 312, 314, 316
 Ch'ü-chou 衢州 in Liang-che-tung, 363
ch'ü sheng-chih 取聖旨 (obtain the imperial will), 112
chuan 絹. *See* silk
chuan ling chih 專領之, 470
chuan-chih kuan-yüan 專知官員 (specialist officials dispatched from the court), 482
chuan-lan 專欄. *See* clerks: abuses of clerks
chuan-tui 轉對. *See* audiences: revolving audience
chuan-yün shih 轉運使. *See* fiscal commissioner
chuan-yün ssu 轉運司. *See* fiscal commissions
ch'uan-chiao fei 船腳費 (freight expenditure), 467
ch'uan-ch'in ma 川秦馬 (northwestern horses), 235
chiian 絹. *See* pongee
 ch'üan 權 (expedient, minimal application of power), 696
 Ch'üan Han-sheng 全漢昇, 534, 584
ch'üan-ch'ien 權臣. *See* chief councilors: weighted minister
 Ch'üan-chou 泉州, 5, 181, 202, 369, 382, 415, 420, 429, 430, 434, 439, 444, 445, 449, 452, 453, 454, 457, 459, 463, 469, 474, 476, 477, 481, 482, 483, 484, 487, 490, 491, 492, 496, 497, 498, 501, 502, 503, 509, 510, 512, 515, 524, 534, 640
 Ch'üan-chou Bay 泉州灣, 452, 454
ch'üan-shih 銓試. *See* placement examination
chuang 莊 (estates), 174
chuang-ting 壯丁 (stalwart men), 262
 Chuang-tzu 莊子 (365–290 BC), and the book by that name, 684, 709, 778
chuang-yüan 狀元 (top ranked examination graduate), 316
ch'uang-tzu nu 床子弩. *See* crossbows: frame-mounted crossbows
ch'üeh 闕 (billet), 67
chun-pei Chiang 準備將. *See* reserve general
Ch'un-ch'iu 春秋. *See* Spring and autumn annals

- Ch'un-chiu tsun-wang fa-wei* 春秋尊王發微. *See* *Commentary on the Spring and autumn annals*
- chün* 軍. *See* army: army – unit
- Chün ware (*Chün-yao* 鈞窯), 375
- Chün-ch'i chien* 軍器監. *See* Directorate for Armaments
- Chün-ch'i i-chia k'u* 軍器衣甲庫. *See* Armory for Uniforms and Armour
- chün-ch'i k'u* 軍器庫. *See* armories
- Chün-ch'i nu-chien k'u* 軍器弩箭庫. *See* Armory for Crossbows and Swords
- Chün-ch'i suo* 軍器所. *See* Armaments Office
- chün-hsü k'u* 軍須庫. *See* armaments storehouses
- chün-hsün shih* 軍巡使. *See* military inspectors
- chün-ping* 軍兵 (ordinary soldiers), 244
- Chün-shu fa*. *See* New Policies: Adjustment of Tribute (or equitable transport) Policy
- Chün-shui fa* 均稅法. *See* Equitable Tax Law
- chün-ti* 均糴. *See* equitable grain purchase
- chün-t'ien fa* 均田法. *See* equitable fields measure
- chün-tzu* 君子 (gentlemen, superior men), 47, 48, 64, 678
- chung* 中 ("average" in evaluations), 63
- chung* 中 (centrality, inner equilibrium), 742
- Chung hsiang ting hsing-t'ung* 重詳定刑統 (Reexamined and redetermined collected penal laws). *See* *Sung penal prospectus*
- chung-chih* 中旨. *See* document processing: directed edicts
- chung-fa ti fen* 重法地分 (heavy penalty places), 272
- Chung-feng ta-fu* 中奉大夫 (senior director grade, "Grand master for palace attendance"), 135
- chung-kuo* 中國 (central states), 724
- Chung-lu fa* 重祿法. *See* Liberal Salaries Law
- Chung-shu men-hsia* 中書門下. *See* Secretariat-Chancellery
- Chung-shu she-jen* 中書舌人, *See also* secretariat drafter, 30
- chung-shu sheng* 中書省. *See* Secretariat
- chung-wen ch'ing-wu* 重文輕武 (emphasize the civil and de-emphasize the military), 29
- Chung-yüan* 中原 (Central Plain), 235, 352, 355, 728
- agricultural changes, 359
- Chung-yung* 中庸 (practice of the equilibrium, *Doctrine of the Mean*), 697
- Ch'ung-jen county 崇仁縣 in Fu-chou, Chiang-nan-hsi, 580, 582
- cinnabar, 453
- circuit (*lu* 路 or, for a short time, *tao* 道), 140, 143
- nature of, 144
- circuit judicial intendants (*chih-lu* 知錄), 264
- civil (*wen* 文), 652, 654, 655, 670, 671
- civil law
- adoption, 274, 276
- contracts, 281
- divorce, 277
- inheritance, 279
- civil officials (*wen-kuan* 文官), 49, 53, 225
- Clark, Hugh, 534, 629, 656
- Classic of filial piety* (*Hsiao-ching* 孝經), 589
- Classic of the mind-and-heart*. *See* *Hsin ching* 心經

- Classics, 43, 44, 94, 309, 647, 671, 673, 682, 685, 690, 698, 726
and the Ancient Style, 675
printing of, 545
- Classics Mat lecturers (*Ching-yen kuan* 經筵官), 93
- Classified legal clauses effective in the Ch'ing-yüan era* (*Ch'ing-yüan t'iao-fa shih-lei* 慶元條法事類), 72, 257, 258
- Clauses from the legal system of the Ministry of Personnel*. See *Li-pu t'iao-fa* 吏部條法
- clerical. See clerks
- clerks (*li* 吏, *hsü-li* 胥吏), 40, 49, 63, 72, 75, 96, 99, 100, 101, 104, 123, 130, 131, 133, 134, 168
abuses of clerks (*chuan-lan* 專欄, *lan-t'ou* 欄頭), 178
bribery of, 197
county clerks (*chieh-chi* 節級), 262
salaries of, 151
Secretariat clerks (*t'ang-bou kuan* 堂後官, literally, "officials behind the hall"), 134
- cloves (*ting-hsiang* 丁香), 514
- coarse goods (*ts'u-se* 粗色), 468
- code. See *lǐ*
- Collected commentaries on the Four Books* (*Ssu-shu chang-chu chi-chu* 四書章句集注), 667
- collected edicts (*p'ien-ch'ih* 編敕), 257
- Collected Works of Mr. Liang-hsi* (*Liang-hsi chi* 梁溪集), 522
- Collected writings on the washing away of wrongs* (*Hsi-yüan chi-lu* 洗冤集錄), 260, 264
- Collection of difficult cases* (*I-yü chi* 疑獄集), 259
- Collection of lucid and equitable judgements* (*Ming-kung shu-p'an Ch'ing-ming chi* 名公書判清明集), 260, 261, 278, 648
- commander-general (*t'ung-chih* 統制), 72
- commenda, 403
- Commentary on the Spring and autumn annals* (*Ch'un-chiu tsun-wang fa-wei* 春秋尊王發微), 677
- commerce
anti-market resistance, 536
commercial activity, 22, 379
regional patterns, 533
- commercial managers (*hsing-ch'ien* 行錢). See also *commercial partnerships*
putting one's money to use (*hsing-ch'ien* 行錢), 404
- commercial partnerships
associations of partners (*chiu-bo* 糾合火伴), 403
joint-capital partnerships (*lien-ts'ai bo-pen* 連財合本), 403
putting one's money to use (*hsing-ch'ien* 行錢), 403. See also *commercial managers*
- commercial tax (*shang-shui* 商稅), 423
- commercial tax offices (*shui-wu* 稅務, *shui-ch'ang* 稅場), 177
- commissioner (*shih* 使), 470
- commissioner (*yü-ying shih* 御營使). See *imperial defense commissioner*
- commodity tax. See *ch'ou-chieh* 抽解
- communications system, 202
- community compact, 542
- compass (*chih-nan chen* 指南針 – "south-pointing needle"), 450
- Compendium of Sung documents*. See *Sung hui-yao chi-kao* 宋會要輯稿
- Comprehending the change*. (*I-t'ung* 易通), 700
- Comprehensive investigations of important documents*. See *Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao*
- Comprehensive mirror for aid in government or Comprehensive mirror that aids administration* (*Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* 資治通鑑), 11, 48, 690, 691

- Comprehensive treatise* (*T'ung-chih* 通志), 690
- confiscated fields (*mo-kuan t'ien* 沒官田), 175
- conflicts and suits (*tou-sung* 鬭訟) in *Sung hsing-t'ung*, 255
- Confucian temples (*K'ung-tzu miao* 孔子廟, *Wen-hsüan wang miao* 文宣王廟), 295, 668
- Confucian tradition, 680
- Confucianism, uses of the term, 666
- Confucius 孔子 (551–479 B.C.), 32, 425, 619, 667, 673, 677, 685, 695, 697, 715, 716, 743, 762, 768, 777, 779, 784
- editing of the *Book of poetry*, 695
- consensus, need for, 39–40
- consultative assemblies (*chi-i* 集議), 38
- controller-general. *See* *t'ung-p'an* 通判
- conventional Confucians. *See* *shih ju* 世儒
- Convoy Escort Squadron (*Chia-kang sbui-chün* 駕綱水軍), 455
- copper (*t'ung* 銅), 502, 505
- in India, 503
- in Korea, 504
- mining of, 191, 408
- copper coins. *See* money: copper coins
- copper wares, 368, 460
- coral (*shan-hu* 珊瑚), 181
- cornelians, 444
- Coromandel, 520
- Correct meanings of the Five Classics* (*Wu-ching cheng-i* 五經正義), 667, 677
- Correcting youthful ignorance* (*Cheng meng* 正蒙), 706, 707
- cotton, 503, 508
- Indian origins of, 508
- counties (*hsien* 縣), 286
- county magistrate (*chih-hsien* 知縣), 51, 407
- role in criminal cases, 264
- county registrars (*chu-pu* 主簿), 262
- county schools (*hsien-hsüeh* 縣學), 294, 301, 303, 307, 318, 541, 624, 709
- county sheriff (*hsien-wei* 縣尉), 51, 262, 263, 383
- courier-transport system (*yu-ch'uan* 郵傳, *yu-ti* 郵遞, *i-ch'uan* 驛傳, *i-ti* 驛遞), 202
- court audience (*ch'ao-hui* 朝會). *See also* morning audience, 43, 44, 50, 136
- Court of Agricultural Supervision (*Ssu-nung ssu* 司農寺), 146, 154, 206
- Court of Judicial Review (*Ta-li ssu* 大理寺), 107, 252
- Court of the Imperial Treasury (*T'ai-fu ssu* 太府寺), 146, 154
- covered names (*feng-mi* 封彌 or *hu-ming* 糊名), 292
- cowries, 453
- Critique of adulterated learning* (*Tsa-hsüeh pien* 雜學編), 740
- crocodile skin, 516
- crossbows
- frame-mounted crossbow (*ch'uang-tzu nu* 床子弩), 234
- strong-armed bow (*shen-pei kung* 神臂弓), 234
- cubebs, 509
- Dai Co Viet 大瞿越, 223, 229
- Daily renewal* (*Jih hsin* 日新), 735
- damask (*ling* 綾), 506, 507
- D'Argenio, Linda, 635
- Davis, Edward, 596, 603, 606
- Davis, Richard L, 307, 629, 657
- deceptions and frauds (*cha-wei* 詐偽) in *Sung hsing-t'ung*, 255
- decorations. *See* wen-ts' ai 文采
- deforestation, 381
- Department of State Affairs (*shang-shu sheng* 尚書省), 37, 98, 100, 125, 137, 153

- Department of the Chancellery. *See* Chancellery
- departmental examination (*sheng-shih* 省試 or *Li-pu shih* 禮部試, Ministry of Rites examination), 290, 292, 294, 296, 297, 301, 306, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318
- candidate numbers, 312, 315, 625, 671
- de Pee, Christian, 590, 632
- deposit shops (*kuei-fang* 櫃坊), 210
- des Rotours, Robert, 26
- destiny (*ming* 命), 681
- De Weerd, Hilde, 313, 564
- Dhofar, 516
- Diary of a journey to Szechwan. See Ju-Shu chi* 入蜀記
- Dinh Bo-inh 丁部領 (Dinh Tien-Hoang De 丁先皇帝 924–79, r. 968–79), Emperor of the Dai Co Viet, 223
- Diplomatic Office (*Kuo-hsin so* 國信所) of the Military Affairs Commission, 67
- directed edicts (*chung-chih* 中旨, *nei-chiang* 內降, *nei-p'i* 內批), 41, 124
- Directorate for Armaments (*Chün-ch'i chien* 軍器監), 153, 233
- Directorate for Construction (*Ying-shan chien* 營繕監), 711
- Directorate for the Palace Buildings (*Chiang-tso chien* 將作監), 153
- Directorate of Education (*kuo-tzu chien* 國子監), 30, 290, 294, 295, 296, 297, 299, 314, 545, 560, 561
- printing by, 547
- Discourse on the essentials of the body. See T'i-yao lun*
- discussions of the classics (*lun* 論), 288, 313
- divorce documents (*li-hun chuang* 離婚狀), 278
- doctor, 655
- doctors and physicians, 546, 555, 558–9, 570, 571, 626
- Doctrine of the mean (Chung-yung* 中庸), 693, 734, 740, 742, 761, 774
- document processing, 40–2
- administrative memorial (*cha-tzu* 劄子), 122
- Capital Memorials Office (*Tu chin-tsou yüan üan* 都進奏院), 122
- directed edicts (*chung-chih* 中旨, *nei-chiang* 內降, *nei-p'i* 內批), 124
- examiner (*chien-cheng* 檢正), 134
- Memorial Presentation Office (*T'ung-chin ssu* 通進司), 123
- memorials and edicts, 121–7
- retained memorial (*chih-tsou* 執奏, *also tsou-ping* 奏稟), 124
- submitted petition (*tsou-chuang* 奏狀), 122
- Transmission Office (*Yin-t'ai ssu* 銀臺司), 123
- dossier. *See yin-chih* 印紙
- Doubting Mencius (I Meng* 疑孟), 693
- Dowager Empress Liu. *See* Empress Liu
- dowries. *See* women: dowries
- draft animals, 354
- Dragon Gorge Academy (*Lung-ch'i shu-t'ang* 龍谿書堂), 311
- dragon kilns (*lung-yao* 龍窯), 376, 428, 429, 498
- Dragon Lake Academy (*Lung-t'an shu-yüan* 龍潭書院), 311
- dragon spittle. *See* ambergris
- dragon-phoenix tea. *See* tea: *lung-feng-ch'a* 龍鳳茶
- dragon's blood (*hsüeh-chieh* 血竭). *See* asafoetida
- dragon-spines (*lung-ku* 龍骨), 452
- dripping milk. *See* frankincense: *ti-ju* 滴乳

- droughts, 40, 172, 193, 335, 337, 338, 339, 341, 352, 356, 385, 387, 392, 394, 395, 412, 413, 414, 416, 417, 433, 759, 764, 765
- Duke of Chou (Chou kung 周公), 720, 768
- East Africa, 504
- East African coast, 493, 518
- Eastern capital: A dream of splendors past, The. See Tung-ching meng-hua lu*
東京夢華錄
- Eastern Chou, 437
- Eastern European "second serfdom", 535
- eastern route (*tung-hang lu* 東行路), 445
- ebony, 444, 509
- Ebrey, Patricia Buckley, 279, 569, 572, 573, 574, 577, 579, 582, 590, 593
- economy
 dynamism of, 3-7, 22-4
- Edicts of Shao-hsing (Shao-hsing chih-ch'ih*
 紹興制敕), 561
- education
 Three Hall system under Hui-tsung, 300, 709
- education intendants (*t'i-chü hsüeh-shih*
 提舉學使), 301, 303
- educational fields (*hsüeh-t'ien* 學田), 174
- Egan, Ronald, 547, 549
- Egypt, 500
- eight virtues (*pa-hsing* 八行) method of
 selection, 301
- elephant tusks, 529
- elephants, 518
- elite culture, 562, 667
- elites, 12-15, 440, 462, 492, 506, 508, 509, 569-608, 713
 capital-centered elite, 623
 court-oriented culture, 631
 elite localism, 650
 examination culture, 624
 local elites, 541, 620, 627
- localist thesis and challenges to it, 627
- marriage strategies, 628
- Muslim, 503
- national elite, 627
- outside China, 506
- pressure of downward mobility, 641
- shih-oriented culture, 631
- southward migration of, 622
- T'ang aristocratic elites, 621
- T'ang to Sung origins, 622
- two cultures approach, 631
- Elman, Benjamin, 636
- Empress Hsiang 向太后 (1046-1101), 91
- Empress Kao 高皇后 (1028-93), 81, 90, 91, 111, 127, 129, 155
- Empress Liu 劉太后 (969-1033), 31, 81, 84, 89, 104, 119
- Empress Meng 孟皇后 (1073-1135), 91
- Empress Wu 吳太后 (1115-97), 91
- Empress Wu 唐則天武后 (624-705, r. 684-705), 30, 91, 95, 148, 543, 544
- Empress Yang 楊皇后 (1162-1232), 90, 91, 95
- empresses, regencies of, 8, 81, 89-90
- environmental destruction, 356
- environmental problems, 381
- epidemics, 4, 334, 335, 340, 341, 417
- equitable-fields measure (*chün-t'ien fa* 均田法), 322, 622, 765
- equitable grain purchase (*chün-ti* 均糶), 198
- Equitable Tax Law (*Chün-shui fa* 均稅法), 166, 347
- Erb-Ch'eng i-shu* 二程遺書 (*Surviving works of the two Ch'engs*), 758
- erb-fu* 二府 (two headquarters), 98
- Erb-ya* 爾雅, 289
- Erb-ya* 爾雅 Hsiao-ching 孝經 (Classic of filial piety), 289

- Erudite Literatus degree (*po-bsüeh bung-tz'u* 博學宏詞), 750, 786
- estate manager (*chien-chuang* 監莊), 174
- Ethiopia, 495
- eunuchs (*buan-kuan* 宦官), 80, 87
military role of, 231
- eunuchs (*nei-shih* 內侍), 470
- Europe, 492
printing in, 544
- European experience
Sung parallels with, 662
- ever-normal granaries. *See* granaries:
price-regulating granaries
- Evidential Learning, 678
- examination administrator (*chih kung-chü* 知貢舉), 292, 298
- examination licentiates (*sheng-yüan* 生員), 17
- examinations (*kung-chü* 貢舉), 9, 34, 57–8, 286, 665
1148 and 1256 lists, 643, 644
candidate numbers, 312, 625
competition and responses to it, 316
curricular changes during the
Ch'ing-li reforms, 293
degree numbers, 34, 290
determining *shih* status, 643
expansion under T'ai-tsung, 286, 290
geographical representation, 295
influence of *Tao-bsüeh*, 723
medical examinations, 563
military examinations, 653
procedures guaranteeing fairness, 292
reforms under Wang An-shih, 298, 709
role in shaping the elite, 541
sleeve-cheaters' texts, 546
in the Southern Sung, 312
special examinations, 317, 410
spurious learning prohibitions, 738
T'ang system, 20, 34
- exchange vouchers (*p'ien-ti liang-ts'ao chiao-yin* 便糴糧草交引, *chiao-ch'ao* 交鈔), 198
- executive inspector (*lu-shih ts'an-chün* 錄事參軍), 267
- executive officials (*chih-cheng kuan* 執政官), 215
- exorcists, 558, 608, 626
- expediency. *See* ch'üan 權
- Expedient Grain Purchase Policy (*Pien-ti* 便糴), 198
- Explanation of the diagram of the supreme ultimate* (T'ai-chi t'u shuo 太極圖說), 699, 755, 757, 777, 778
- Explanations of characters* (Tzu shuo 子說), 687, 709
- Extended meaning of the Great learning. See* Ta-bsüeh yen-i 大學衍義
- fa-ch'ien* 罰錢 (fine for losing a legal dispute), 164
- fa-shih* 法師, 609. *See* rite master
- Fa-tsang* 法藏, 544
- fa-yün shih* 發運使. *See* supply commissioners
- facilitated degrees (*t'e tsou ming* 特奏名), 54, 58, 65, 290, 624
- Fairbank, John K., xv
- fairness or impartiality (*kung* 公), 293
- false (or imitation) dragon's blood (*chia bsüeh-chieh* 假血竭), 514
- family and marriage (*hu-hun* 戶婚) in *Sung hsing-t'ung*, 255
- family strategies, 410
- family-property wealth (*chia-yeh wu-li* 家業物力), 407
- famine (most commonly, *chi* 饑), 58, 204, 205, 209, 212, 335, 336, 337, 352, 364, 387, 388, 392, 407, 410, 433
Liang-che-tung famine, 413
P'o-yang basin famine, 412
relief, 203
- fan* 硯 or 礬. *See* alum
- Fan Chen 范鎮 (1008–89), 106
- Fan Ch'eng-ta 范成大 (1120–93), 419, 449

- Fan Chih 范峙 (1126–89), 309, 401
- Fan Chung-yen 范仲淹 (989–1052),
38, 63, 76, 80, 84, 93, 105,
106, 205, 293, 337, 341, 634,
656, 674, 677, 679
reforms of, 55
- Fan Clan's landed trust, 343
- Fan Tsu-yü 范祖禹 (1041–98), 62, 111,
690
- fan-chen* 藩鎮. *See* army: frontier defence
commands
- Fan-ch'eng 樊城, 248
- fan-ping* 蕃兵. *See* army: frontier tribal
troops
- Fang, Cheng-hua, 653, 654
- Fang Hao 方豪, 467
- Fang La 方臘 rebellion (1120–21), 162,
232
- Fang Yüeh 方岳 (1199–1262), 432
- fang-chih* 方志. *See* local gazetteers
- fang-hsien* 放限 (extended deadline real
estate payments), 197
- fang-kuo hu* 坊郭戶 (living in the cities),
175
- Fang-t'ien chün-shui fa* 方田均稅法. *See*
New Policies: Land Survey and
Equitable Tax Policy
- fang-wu* 方物 (local products), 461
- farm tools, 352
broad, intricately structured share
(hua 鐮), 353
curved beam plough, 353
iron-drag hoe, 354
small, sharp share (ch'an 鏟), 353
tillage trays (keng-p'an 耕盤), 353
- Fedele, Fortunato, 260
- fei shih-liu* 非士流 (*not of a gentleman's
sort*), 642
- fei-tz'u* 非次 (extraordinary positions),
70
- Fen River (Fen-ho 汾河), 329
- feng-chuang chin-chün ch'üeh-o ch'ien* 封樁
禁軍闕額錢 (remitted imperial
army vacancy funds), 199
- Feng-chuang k'u* 封樁庫. *See* Imperial
Reserve Treasury
- Feng-hsiang fu ch'ien-p'an* 鳳翔府簽判
(administrative assistant of
Feng-hsiang Prefecture), 67
- feng-lu* 俸祿. *See* official salaries
- feng-mi* 封彌. *See* covered names
- feng-po* 封駁 (return for correction – for
documents), 40
- feng-shan* 封禪 sacrifices, 148, 193
- fidelity cult, 570
- field commanders (*chu-shuai* 主帥), 214
- Fields of Merit in Buddhism, 601
- Finance administrative assistants
(*San-ssu p'an-kuan* 三司判官),
144
- Finance Commission or State Finance
Commission (*San-ssu* 三司,
“three offices”), 86, 116, 124,
136, 137, 145, 146, 165, 194,
198, 233, 479, 480, 481
abolition of, 153
- Tso-ts'ang k'u* 左藏庫, (Left
Storehouse of the Finance
Commission), 194, 199
- Finance Commissioner (*San-ssu shih* 三
司使), 98, 146, 480
- Finance Planning Commission
(*Chih-chih san-ssu t'iao-li ssu* 制
置三司條例司), literally
Bureau for the Implementation
of Fiscal Regulations, 41, 130,
150
- finance supervision cash (*ts'ung-chih
ch'ien* 聰制錢), 163
- Finance Vice Commissioner (*San-ssu
fu-shih* 三司副使), 144, 480
- financial contribution (*chin-na* 進納), 58
- financial service, 141
- fine goods (*hsi-se* 細色), 468
- Finest blossoms from the park of literature.*
See *Wen-yüan ying-hua* 文苑英
華, 671, 672
- firebombs (*huo-p'ao* 火炮), 457

- fiscal commission (*chuan-yün ssu* 轉運司), 471, 475, 477
- fiscal commissioner (*chuan-yün-shih* 轉運使, *ts'ao-ssu* 漕司), 69, 144, 145, 146, 164, 470, 479, 480
- fiscal state (*ts'ai-cheng kuo-chia* 財政國家), 6
- Five classics (*Wu-ching* 五經), 289
- Five Dynasties period, 8, 20, 21, 29, 60, 99, 113, 142, 147, 161, 168, 175, 184, 192, 209, 214, 215, 216, 219, 237, 271, 284, 288, 291, 333, 341, 358, 513, 523, 545, 623
- maritime trade, 437, 438, 441, 462
- Five Phases (*wu-hsing* 五行), 690, 703, 716
- floods, 193, 340, 385, 392, 412
- flower and rock convoys (*hua-shih kang* 花石綱), 202
- Flower garland sutra (*Hua-yen-ching* 華嚴經), 522
- Flying Tiger Army (Fei-hu chün 飛虎軍), 654
- Fodder Yard (*Ts'ao-liao ch'ang* 草料場), 236
- Food products, 368
- footbinding
- effect on female mobility and fitness, 572
- foreign gharuwood. *See* gharuwood:
- fan-ch'en* 番沈
- foreigners (*yang-jen* 洋人), 476
- Former Kings (Hsien wang 先王), 713
- forts (*chai* 塞), 263
- Franke, Herbert, xv, 167
- frankincense or "milky incense"
- (*ju-hsiang* 乳香), 181, 489, 509, 510, 512
- chien-hsiang* 揀香 (selected incense), 512
- ti-ju* 滴乳 (dripping milk), 512
- Frontier Defense Office (*Ching-fu fang* 經撫房), 131
- fu* 府. *See* prefectures
- fu* 賦. *See* poetry
- Fu Hsi 伏羲 (one of the three monarchs in ancient time), 678, 690
- Fu Pi 富弼 (1004–83), 31, 32, 35, 36, 38, 39, 48, 679
- Fu Yao-yü 傅堯俞 (1024–91), 105
- Fu Yeh, 616
- Fu-chien circuit 福建路, 272, 333, 345, 346, 349, 354, 361, 362, 363, 366, 376, 386, 392, 394, 396, 401, 410, 413, 418, 419, 420, 421, 424, 427, 429, 430, 433, 452, 455, 457, 458, 471, 477, 480, 482, 486, 488, 489, 490, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 507, 518, 521, 522, 605, 607, 622, 629, 669, 721, 735, 783, 784
- agriculture and trade, 414
- infanticide in, 411
- population, 411
- Fu-chou 撫州 in Chiang-nan-hsi, 406, 412, 432, 534, 627, 629, 642, 646, 647, 648, 772, 776
- Fu-chou 福州 in Fu-chien, 368, 411, 415, 416, 420, 421, 434, 444, 455, 482, 496, 501, 646
- prefectural school in, 307
- fu-k'o* 婦科. *See* women: women's medicine
- Fu-shan 福山, 424
- fu-shih* 副使 (vice commissioner), 144
- fu-shih* 復試 (re-examination), 315
- fu-shih* 附試 (supplementary examination), 317
- Fu-yang county 富陽縣 in Hang-chou, Liang-che-hsi, 425
- Fu-yen 鄺延路 circuit or military district, 144, 224, 227
- Fujiwara no Yorinaga 藤原頼長 (1120–56), 521
- Fuller, Michael, 551

- Funan 扶南 (Phnam), 446
 function in governance. *See* yung 用
 furs, 182
 Furth, Charlotte, 570, 571, 572, 575
Further record of Ch'ing-liang (Hsü
Ch'ing-liang chuan 續清涼傳),
 598
- gardenia flowers, 509
 Garhwal, 503
 garrison commander (*chen-chiang* 鎮將),
 262
 garrisons (*t'un* 屯), 365
 Gates, Hill, 638
 gauze, 506
 gender relations, 570
 general commissioners of supply
 (*tsung-ling shih* 總領使), 157
 General of Coastal Defense (*Yen-hai tu*
chih-chih shih 沿海都制置使),
 459
 general principles (*ming-li* 名例) in *Sung*
hsing-t'ung, 254
 gentlemen of occult arts (*fang-shih* 方
 士), 606
 gentry, 20, 621, 627
 Gernet, Jacques, 32
 Gerritsen, Anne, 618
 Gharuwood or "sinking aroma"
 (*ch'en-hsiang* 沉香), 509, 510,
 529
chan-hsiang 暫香 (provisional
 gharuwood), 510
chien-hsiang 箋香 (flat gharuwood),
 510
fan-ch'en 番沈 (foreign gharuwood),
 510
su-hsiang 速香 (quick dropping
 gharuwood), 510
yao-ch'en 藥沈 (medicinal
 gharuwood), 510
 giant clams (*ch'e-ch'ü* 車渠), 444
 Gimello, Robert, 598
 ginseng, 182
- Going up the river during the Spring*
Festival. See Ch'ing-ming shang-ho
t'u 清明上河圖
- Golas, Peter, xvi, 5, 6, 139, 191, 537
 gold, 7, 186, 194, 209, 504, 505, 529
 gold dinar, 505
 Goldstone, Jack, 663
 good behavior (*te-hsing* 德行), 293
 Goose Lake Monastery, 773
 debate at, 773
 government expenditures
 by local governments, 195
 for the military, 197
 government monopolies, 3, 5, 6, 141,
 145, 183
 salt monopoly (*chüeh-yen fa* 榷鹽法),
 184
 tea monopoly, 178
 wine monopoly, 187
 government revenues, 140, 156, 211
 from land taxes, 6
 from maritime trade, 181, 468,
 487
 non-agricultural nature of, 148
 pacification cash revenues, 163
 from tea, 190
 from tribute (*kung* 貢), 164
 wine monopoly revenues, 187
 government revenues and expenditures,
 147
 government stables and treasuries
 (*chiu-k'ü* 廐庫) in *Sung*
hsing-t'ung, 255
 government trading offices (*chüeh-ch'ang*
 榷場, *chüeh-wu* 榷務), 182
 government-owned land (*kuan-t'ien* 官
 田), 165, 174
 granaries (*ts'ang* 倉), 145, 146, 151,
 154, 155, 160, 171, 173, 195,
 202, 204, 205, 235, 338, 339,
 410, 411, 417, 640, 644, 656,
 765
 charitable granaries (*i-ts'ang* 義倉),
 540

- price-regulating granaries
 ("ever-normal granaries,"
ch'ang-p'ing ts'ang 常平倉), 145,
 206
- village or community granaries
(she-ts'ang 社倉), 206, 540
- Grand Canal. *See also* Pien Canal, 324,
 330, 339, 365, 381, 382, 383,
 391, 399, 400, 402, 422, 423,
 442, 501, 630
- navigation along, 399
- Grand Marshal Headquarters (*Ping-ma
 ta-yüan-shuai fu* 兵馬大元率
 府), 231
- grand military granaries/storehouses (*ta
 chün ts'ang* 大軍倉/庫), 236
- Grand scribe's records. *See* Shih-chi
- great acts of grace (*ta-she* 大赦),
 273
- "Great Learning" (*Ta-hsüeh* 大學), 718,
 740
- Great records of emperors and kings* (Huang
 wang ta-chi 皇王大記), 736
- Greek Orthodox church, 506
- guilds (*hang* 行)
hang-i 行役 (official exactions on
 guilds), 179
- Gujarati merchants, 503
- Gulf of Bengal, 447
- Gulf of Thailand, 446
- gunpowder, 237, 662
- Gunpowder Shop, 234
- Hadhramaut, 510, 516, 518
- haematite, 509
- hai-ch'uan shui* 海船稅. *See* tax on
 overseas vessels
- Hai-ling Island 海陵島, 462
- Hai-nan 海南, 520
- Hai-nan Island 海南島, 445, 502,
 508
- hai-yao* 海藥 (medicine from overseas),
 519
- Hakata, 496
- Hall of Administration
 (Cheng-shih-t'ang 政事堂). *See*
 State Council
- Hall of Civil Virtue (Wen-te-tien 文德
 殿), 87
- Hall of Light (Ming-t'ang 明堂), 83, 87
- Halperin, Mark, 597, 620
- Hamashima Atsutoshi 濱島敦俊, 395
- Hami, 440
- Han Ch'i 韓琦 (1008–75), 130, 293,
 578, 679
- Han Chiang 韓絳 (1012–88), 41
- Han 漢 dynasty (206 BC–AD 220), 259,
 352, 442, 446, 608, 667, 678,
 680, 681, 694, 712, 729, 744,
 766, 767, 770
- Confucianism, 771
- maritime contacts, 437, 678
- rulers, 768, 771
- scholars, 764, 767
- Han Hsüan-ti 漢宣帝 (91–49 BC, r.
 74–49 BC), 767
- Han River 漢江, 249
- Han Shih-chung 韓世忠 (1089–1151),
 86, 164, 240, 241, 243
- Han T'o-chou 韓侂胄 (1152–1207),
 128, 130, 132, 136, 137, 182,
 246, 762, 787
- Han Wu-ti 漢武帝 (156–87 BC, r.
 140–87 BC), 148
- Han Yü 韓愈 (768–824), 32, 636, 667,
 672, 673, 675, 694
- Han-chou 漢州 in Ch'eng-tu-fu circuit,
 72
- Han-lin academicians (*Han-lin
 hsüeh-shih* 翰林學士), 84, 92
- Han-lin Academy (Han-lin yüan 翰林
 院), 92, 94, 95, 96
- Han-lin hsüeh-shih* 翰林學士. *See* Hanlin
 academicians
- Han-shu* 漢書. *See* *History of the former
 Han dynasty*
- Han-yang commandery 漢陽軍 in
 Ching-hu-pei, 414

- handicrafts, 368
- hang 行. *See* guilds
- Hang-chou 杭州. *See also* Lin-an 臨安
(Southern Sung capital), 22, 26,
133, 135, 156, 234, 243, 306,
312, 334, 341, 365, 380, 383,
388, 391, 392, 398, 400, 403,
404, 406, 407, 417, 418, 421,
423, 424, 426, 428, 430, 432,
433, 434, 456, 457, 459, 475,
476, 478, 501, 503, 512, 515,
522, 534, 535, 543, 545, 547,
552, 554, 646
- Hang-chou Bay 杭州灣, 441, 451, 500
- Hansen, Valerie, 610, 611, 612, 613
- hao-beng* 豪橫 (overbearing), 646
- Hao-shui-ch'uan 好水川, battle of, 224
- harmonious grain purchase (*ho-ti* 和糴),
198
- harmonious purchase (*ho-mai* 和買 or
ch'ou-mai 抽買), 176, 365. *See also*
purchase of silk
- harmonious separation. *See* *ho-li* 和離
- harmony. *See* *ho* 和, *t'iao-ho*
- Harrist, Robert, 528
- Hartman, Charles, xvi, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13,
16, 19, 264, 636, 731
- Hartwell, Robert, 6, 14, 139, 141, 179,
181, 192, 193, 207, 210, 302,
329, 377, 484, 490, 627, 630,
640, 649
- head tax (*shen-ting chien/mi* 身丁錢/米,
k'ou-fu 口賦), 158, 161
- Heaven (*t'ien* 天), 38, 280, 736
- Heavenly Letters (*T'ien-shu* 天書), 604
- heavenly principle. *See* *t'ien-li* 天理
- Hebrew sources, 503
- hegemons (*pa* 霸), 760
- Hei-sha* 黑殺. *See* Black Killer
- Heng, Derek Thiam Soon, 466
- Henry VIII, dissolution of monasteries,
600
- herbs, 182
- Hervouet, Yves, xv
- Heuksan Island, 445
- Hidden void (Ch'ien-hsü 潛虛), 693
- Hino Kaisabur 日野開三郎
(1908–89), 183
- Hired Service Policy or System (*Mu-i fa*
募役法). *See* New Policies:
Hired Service Policy
- Hirth, Friedrich, 510
- History of the Five Dynasties* (*Chiu wu-tai*
shih 舊五代史), 671
- History of the former Han dynasty* (*Han-shu*
漢書), 289, 446
- History of the later Han dynasty* (*Hou-Han*
shu 後漢書), 289
- Hizen 肥前, 441
- ho* 和 (harmony, harmonious, in accord),
36
- Ho Ch'ang-yen 何昌言 (1067–1126),
75
- ho chao mu* 和昭穆 (qualified to perform
ancestral sacrifices), 275
- Ho Chi 何基 (1188–1268), 785
- Ho Chih-chung 何執中 (1044–1117),
79
- Ho Meng 和岷, 259
- Ho Ning 和凝 (898–955), 259
- Ho Ping-ti 何炳棣, 363
- ho-li* 和離 (harmonious separation), 278
- ho-mai* 和買. *See* harmonious purchase
and purchase of silk
- Ho-nan circuit 河南路, 354, 356
- Ho-pei circuit 河北路, 174, 198, 224,
231, 272, 335, 336, 338, 339,
342, 343, 344, 354, 356, 357,
371, 372, 373, 377, 386, 389,
435
- exemption from the salt monopoly,
186
- T'ang to Sung population change,
329
- Ho-pei fan-chen* 河北藩鎮 (Ho-pei
rebels), 48
- Ho-pei-tung circuit 河北東路, 339,
382

- Ho-p'u 合浦, 520
 Ho-p'u county 合浦縣 in Lien-chou, Kuang-nan-hsi, 446, 500
 Ho-shang yüan 和尚原, battle of, 242
ho-ti 和籩. *See* harmonious grain purchase
 Ho-tung circuit 河東路, 159, 174, 224, 227, 273, 336, 338, 339, 344, 354, 356, 357, 359, 368, 370, 371, 372, 387, 389
 horses, 182
 Hou-chu 后渚, 452, 483
bou-kung 後宮. *See* imperial harem
bou-tien tsai-tso 後殿再座. *See* second sitting in the back hall
 house clients. *See* *men-k'o*
 Hsi Hsia 西夏 kingdom (Western Hsia, 1032-1227), 28, 148, 181, 222, 230, 233, 338, 486
 Sung wars with, 245
hsi-chiao 犀角. *See* rhinoceros horn
hsi-hang lu 西行路. *See* western route
Hsi-bo 熙河 circuit or military district, 144, 224, 227
hsi-hu 畦戶. *See* neighboring salt farmers
Hsi-jung 西戎 (Tibetans), 448
Hsi-ping 西兵. *See* Western Troops
Hsi-p'ing-fu 西平府, 230
hsi-se 細色. *See* fine goods
Hsi-yü po (西域舶). *See* Persian and Arab ships
Hsi-yü shang 西域商. *See* Persian and Arab merchants
Hsi-yüan chi-lu 洗冤集錄, 260. *See* *Collected writings on the washing away of wrongs*
 Hsia, Ronald Po-chia, 618
hsia-shui 夏稅. *See* summer tax
hsiang 廂 (wing - army unit), 216
hsiang 鄉. *See* rural district, subdistrict
 Hsiang-chou 相州 in Ho-pei-hsi, 377
hsiang-chün 廂軍. *See* army: provincial armies or prefectural armies
 Hsiang-hsiang county 湘鄉縣 in T'an-chou, Ching-hu-nan, 645
hsiang-kung 鄉貢 (district tribute scholars), 292
hsiang-ping 鄉兵. *See* army: local militias
 Hsiang-shan (Elephant Mountain) Academy 象山書院, 776
hsiang-tieh 象疊. *See* scent holders of ivory
hsiang-ts'un bu 鄉村戶 (people living in the countryside), 175
hsiang-ya 象牙. *See* ivory
 Hsiang-yang prefecture 襄陽府 in Ching-hsi-nan, 236, 248
hsiang-yao 香藥 (aromatics, including medicinal plants, scented wood, incense, spices, perfumes, and drugs), 5, 182, 444, 465, 466, 468, 491, 492, 509, 517, 518, 524
Hsiang-yao-k'u 香藥庫. *See* Warehouse for Aromatics
hsiao shih-ch'en 小使臣 (servitors minor), 50
hsiao-hsing 孝行 (filial piety), 75
 Hsiao-hu-yang village 小戶楊村 in Yün-yang 雲陽 District, Ching-yang county 涇陽縣, Ching-chao prefecture 京兆府, Yung-hsing-chün circuit, 448
hsiao-jen 小人 (small men, inferior men, petty men), 47, 48, 128, 678
 Hsiao-tsung 孝宗 (Chao Po-ts'ung 趙伯琮 1127-94, r. 1162-89), 35, 37, 43, 47, 57, 66, 74, 90, 91, 92, 100, 108, 112, 115, 116, 117, 118, 135, 136, 137, 164, 172, 194, 244, 245, 246, 687, 737, 760
hsiao-yung-fa 效用法. *See* army: volunteer system
 Hsieh Liang-tso 謝良佐 (1050-1103), 739, 747

- hsien* 縣. *See* counties
- hsien t'ien* 先天 (learning of what is prior to heaven), 701
- Hsien wang* 先王. *See* Former Kings
- hsien-ch'eng* 縣丞. *See* vice magistrate
- hsien-ch'ien kuan-tzu* 見錢關子 (cash communicating medium), 211
- hsien-hsiieh* 縣學. *See* county schools
- Hsien-jen-kuan* 仙人關, battle of, 242
- hsien-nan hou-pei* 先南後北 (first south, then north), 221
- hsien-ssu* 憲司. *See* judicial commissioner
- hsien-ti chui-cheng* 見地追徵 (unpredictable surcharges), 186
- hsien-wei* 縣尉. *See* army: county defenders, county sheriff
- hsin* 心 (heart-mind, mind-and-heart), 730, 734
- Hsin Ch'i-chi* 辛棄疾 (1140-1207), 654
- hsin chih te* 心之德 (virtue of the mind), 744
- Hsin ching* 心經 (*Classic of the mind-and-heart*), 786
- Hsin T'ang-shu* 新唐書 (*New T'ang history*), 27, 54, 128, 130, 447, 696
- Hsin Wu-tai shih* 新五代史. *See* *New history of the Five Dynasties*,
- Hsin-chou* 信州 in Chiang-nan-hsi, 379, 412
- hsing* 性. *See* human nature
- hsing erb shang* 形而上 (above form), 728
- Hsing ware* (*Hsing-yao* 邢窑), 373
- hsing-ch'ien* 行錢 *See* commercial managers: putting one's money to use; commercial partnerships: putting one's money to use
- Hsing-chou* 邢州 (*Hsin-te fu* 信德府) in Ho-pei-hsi, 372, 377
- Hsing-hua* commandery 興化軍 in Fu-chien, 415
- hsing-ming* 性命, 687
- Hsing-pu* 刑部. *See* Ministry of Justice
- hsing-yen ti* 行鹽地 (a given area for which a merchant undertook to sell a certain quota of salt), 184
- Hsing-ying tso-hu chiün* 行營左護軍. *See* Left Guardian Army for the Imperial Encampment
- Hsing-yüan-fu* 興元府 in Li-chou circuit, 243
- Hsin-hui* county 新會縣 in Kuang-chou, Kuang-nan-tung, 498
- hsin-k'o ming-fa* 新科明法 (new degree in law), 299
- Hsiu-chou* 秀州 (*Chia-hsing fu* 嘉興府) in Liang-che-hsi, 387, 388, 393, 398, 419, 421, 422, 475, 478, 490
- Hsiu-tsao an* 修造案. *See* Palace Construction Section
- Hsiung Ho* 熊禾 (1253-1312), 521
- Hsiung Hsiang* 態相, 646
- Hsü Chi* 徐積 (1028-1103), 577
- Hsü Chien* 徐鉉, 522
- Hsü Ching* 徐競 (1091-1153), 452, 454
- Hsü tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien* 續資治通鑑長編 (*The long draft continuation of the comprehensive mirror that aids administration*), 25
- Hsü-chou* 徐州 in Ching-tung-hsi, 355, 378
- hsü-li* 胥吏. *See* clerks
- Hsü-p'u* 許浦, 457
- hsü-shih* 虛市 (periodic market in southernmost China), 384
- Hsü-wen* 徐聞, 446
- Hsüan-chou* 宣州 (*Ning-kuo fu* 寧國府) in Chiang-nan-tung, 368
- hsüan-chü*. *See* selection examinations
- Hsüan-feng* Army 選鋒軍, 231

- Hsüan-ho feng-shih Kao-li t'u-ching* 宣和奉使高麗圖經 (*Illustrated description of the Chinese embassy to Korea during the reign of Hsüan-ho*, 1119–25), 452
- hsüan-jen* 選人 (selection men, executory officials), 50, 51
- hsüeh* 學. *See* learning
- Hsüeh Chi-hsüan 薛季宣 (1134–73), 723
- Hsüeh Hsiang 薛向 (1016–81), 165, 476
- Hsüeh Hsüan 薛瑄 (1389–1464), 660
- hsüeh-chieh* 血竭. *See* dragon's blood
- Hsüeh-chiu* 學究 (Specialization in one or two classics), 289
- Hsüeh-shih yüan 學士院. *See* Institute of Academicians
- hsüeh-t'ien* 學田. *See* educational fields
- hsün-chien* 巡檢. *See* patrolling inspectors, police chiefs
- hsün-lu-hsiang* 薰陸香 (*bun-luk*, older Chinese term for frankincense), 510
- Hsün-tzu 荀子 (312–230 BC), 693
- Hu An-kuo 胡安國 (1074–1138), 733, 735, 757
- Hu Hsien 胡憲 (1082–1162), 739
- Hu Hung 胡宏 (1106–61), 728, 735, 739, 740, 742, 748, 750, 755, 756, 757, 765, 780
- Hu San-sheng 胡三省 (1230–1302), 48
- Hu Shih-chiang 胡世將 (1085–1142), 239
- Hu Tsung-yü 胡宗愈 (1029–94), 111
- Hu Yin 胡寅 (1098–1156), 724
- Hu Ying 胡穎 (1232 chin-shih), 644
- Hu Yüan 胡瑗 (993–1057), 669, 676, 728
- bu-chiao* 胡椒. *See* black pepper
- Hu-chou 湖州 (An-chi chou 安吉州) in Liang-che-hsi, 345, 365, 369, 370, 373, 383, 387, 388, 393, 397, 420, 423, 426, 507
- bu-bun* 戶婚. *See* family and marriage
- Hu-Kuang 湖廣 (Ching-hu and Kuang-nan circuits), 236
- Hu-ma fa* 戶馬法. *See* military: Household Horse Law
- bu-ming* 糊名. *See* covered names
- Hu-pu* 戶部. *See* Ministry of Revenue
- Hu-pu shang-shu* 戶部尚書. *See* Ministry of Revenue: Minister of Revenue
- Hu-pu si* 戶部司. *See* Census Bureau
- hua* 鑷. *See* farm tools: broad, intricately structured share
- Hua-kuang-chiao 華光礁 I (Hua-kuang Reef No. 1), 445
- Hua-Pei Plain (*Hua-pei p'ing-yüan* 華北平原), 329
- hua-shih kang* 花石綱. *See* flower and rock convoys
- Hua-t'ing county 華亭縣 in Hsiu-chou, Liang-che-hsi, 395, 475, 476, 478
- Hua-yen-ching* 華嚴經. *See* Flower Garland Sutra
- Huai River 淮河, 28, 155, 174, 241, 245, 327, 329, 346, 389, 390, 391, 399, 435, 441, 457
- Huai-nan 淮南, 337, 339, 340
- Huai-nan circuit 淮南路, 272, 273, 337, 345, 346, 363, 388, 395, 421, 456
- Huai-nan-hsi circuit 淮南西路, 156, 236, 354, 413, 416
- Huai-nan-tung circuit 淮南東路, 135, 156, 236, 339, 354, 382, 413, 416, 458
- Huan-ch'ing 環慶 circuit or military district, 144, 224, 227
- huan-hsi ch'ien* 歡喜錢 ("elation cash," fee paid for winning a legal dispute), *See also* yen-ts'u ch'ien, 164
- huan-kuan* 宦官. *See* eunuchs
- Huang Ch'ao 黃巢 (d. 884), 443

- Huang Chen 黃震 (1213–80), 213, 556, 557, 614, 642, 652
- Huang chi ching shih shu 皇極經世書. *See* *Supreme principles governing the world*
- Huang Kan 黃幹 (1152–1221), 580, 646, 647, 648, 649, 651, 722, 784, 785, 786, 788
- Huang Kuan-chung 黃寬重, 654
- Huang, Susan Shih-shan, 568
- Huang T'ing-chien 黃庭堅 (1045–1105), 63, 527
- Huang wang ta-chi 皇王大記. *See* *Great records of emperors and kings*
- Huang-chou 黃州 in Ching-hu-pei, 248, 414
- huang-hou 皇后 (empress), 56
- Huang-hua ssu-ta chi 皇華四達記, 447, 449
- Huang-Lao thought. *See* Taoism:
- Huang-Lao thought
- huang-t'ai-hou 皇太后 (dowager empress), 88
- Huang-ti 皇帝. *See* Imperial titles
- Huang-ti 黃帝 (one of the three monarchs in ancient time), 678
- hui 會, 703. *See* markets: gathering
- hui-i 回易 (special designation for loans by military officials), 196
- Hui-min 惠民 River, 202, 380
- Hui-tsung 徽宗 (Chao Chi 趙佶, 1082–1135, r. 1100–25), 4, 9, 15, 25, 42, 88, 89, 90, 92, 95, 96, 120, 130, 131, 133, 155, 194, 202, 205, 230, 231, 232, 301, 303, 454, 468, 538, 605, 606, 607, 624, 711, 721
- enfeoffments of gods, 612
- philosophical commentaries of, 709
- hui-tzu 會子. *See also* paper currency, money
- certificates of deposit, 194, 210, 211
- hui-yin 回引. *See* certificates for maritime traders: for permission to trade at locations in China
- human actualities and emotions. *See* jen-ch'ing 人情
- human nature (hsing 性), 681, 714, 736
- humaneness. *See* jen 仁
- Hung Mai 洪邁 (1123–1202), 63, 72, 76, 80, 93, 107, 133, 136, 404, 406, 533, 584, 585, 611, 646
- hung-ch'i 紅契. *See* red contracts
- Hung-chou 洪州 (Lung-hsing fu 隆興府) in Chiang-nan-hsi, 394, 617, 647
- huo-hu 鑊戶 (caldron households), 190
- huo-p'ao 火炮. *See* fire bombs
- Hymes, Robert, xvi, 7, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 319, 572, 608, 613, 623, 640, 644, 652, 656
- i 意 (meaning), 527
- i tao te 一道德 (unified morality), 299
- i tao-te t'ung feng-su 以道德同風俗 (unifying morality and making customs the same), 710
- i wen chih wu 以文制武 (civilian control of the military), 216
- i-ch'an 義產. *See* charitable foundations
- i-ch'uan 驛傳. *See* courier-transport system
- I-chien chih 夷堅志 (*Record of the listener*), 80, 404, 533, 611
- i-chüeh 義絕 (righteous separation), 277
- i-hsiang 移鄉 (transferred in residence), 277
- i-i 義役. *See* charitable service
- i-kuan 一貫 (threaded by consistency, threads it all on a single strand), 690, 697
- i-li 義理 (moral principles), 718
- I-Lo yüan-yüan lu 伊洛淵源錄 (*Records of the evolution of the I-Lo school of the two Ch'engs*), 757
- i-ti 驛遞. *See* courier-transport system

- I-wu county 義烏縣 in Wu-chou, Liang-che-tung, 398
- I-yü chi* 疑獄集. *See* *Collection of difficult cases*
- i-yung* 義勇 (righteous braves), 200
- Ibn Khurdādhbih (c. 820–912), 443
- Ichiki Tsuyuhiko 市來津由彦, 723
- Ihara Hiroshi 伊原弘, 629
- Illustrated description of the Chinese embassy to Korea during the reign of Hsüan-ho*, 1119–25. *See* *Hsüan-ho feng-shih Kao-li t'u-ching* 宣和奉使高麗圖經
- Imperial Bodyguard Cavalry/Infantry Bureau of the Commander-in-chief (*Shih-wei ch'in-chün ma-chün/pu-chün tu-chih-hui shih ssu* 侍衛親軍馬軍/步軍都指揮使司), 215
- imperial city (*ta-nei* 大內 “Great Inner”), 87
- imperial clan (*tsung-shih* 宗室), 80, 82, 90, 91–2, 95, 97, 131, 193, 395, 482, 490, 491, 524, 656
- clan departmental examination, 317
- costs of clan in Ch'üan-chou, 484
- role in maritime trade, 482
- imperial clan (*tsung-shih* 宗室)
- clansmen, 52, 54, 287
- expenditures for, 434
- Hsi-/Nan- wai tsung-cheng ssu* 西/南外宗政司. *See* Western/Southern Outer Office of Clan Affairs
- imperial clansmen (*tsung-shih* 宗室), 56
- Imperial Defense Command (Yü-ying ssu 御營司), 132, 238, 239
- imperial defense commissioner (*yü-ying shih* 御營使), 132, 238
- imperial guard and imperial palace prohibitions (*wei-chin* 衛禁) in *Sung hsing-t'ung*, 254
- imperial harem (hou-kung 後宮), 88
- imperial institution, 80–6
- imperial predecessors (tsu-tsung 祖宗), 83
- Imperial Reserve Treasury (*Feng-chuang k'u* 封樁庫), 193
- Imperial titles
- Huang-ti* 皇帝, *T'ien-tzu* 天子 (Son of Heaven), *Ying-yün t'ung-t'ien sheng-ming wen-wu huang-ti* 應運統天聖明文武皇帝 (In Accord With Fortune and In Unity With Heaven, the Sagacious and Enlightened, Civil and Martial August Sovereign), 82
- imperial tombs, 82, 193
- imperial troops. *See* *chin-chün* 禁軍
- Imperial University (*T'ai-hsiieh* 太學), 294, 300, 301, 302, 306, 318, 368, 676, 710, 711, 750
- entrance examination, 314
- growth under Hui-tsung, 302
- student activities at, 307
- imperial will (*sheng-chih* 聖旨), 37
- imperialy brushed hand-written edicts. *See* *yü-pi shou-chao*
- incense (*ju-hsiang* 乳香), 516
- incense, 460
- incense wood, 509
- incentive payments (*ju-chung hsü-ku* 入中虛估, *chia-t'ai* 加抬), 198
- India, 442, 446, 495, 500, 503, 504, 505, 508, 509, 516, 518, 519, 520, 522
- Indian guilds, 444
- Indian merchants, 442, 508
- Indian Ocean, 438, 439, 441, 444, 445, 464, 493, 495, 496, 505, 507, 510
- Indian Peninsula, 515
- Indian settlements, 444
- Indonesia, 429, 500
- Indo-Scythian merchants, 442
- infanticide, 411
- inn keeper/market broker (*ya-jen* 牙人, *tien-chu ya-jen* 店主牙人), 406

- Inner chapters on observing things* (*Kuan wu nei-p'ien* 觀物內篇), 701, 703, 705
- Inner classic of the Yellow Emperor* (*Huang-ti nei-ching* 黃帝內經), 709
- Inoue Susumu 井上進, 549
- Institute of Academicians (Hsüeh-shih yüan 學士院), 80, 87, 92, 137
- integrity (*i* 義, what is right), 766
- investigating things. *See* *ko-wu* 格物
- Iran, 443, 500, 516, 519
- Iraq, 500
- iron (*kang* 鋼)
- fine iron (*pin-t'ieh* 寶鐵), 516
 - mining of, 191
 - production of, 377, 501
- iron and steel (*kang-t'ieh* 鋼鐵), 501
- iron bombs, 458
- ironwood, 454
- Islamic world, 522
- Isthmus of Kra, 447
- ivory (*hsiang-ya* 象牙), 182, 444, 475, 516, 518, 524, 529
- Jade sea. *See* Yü-hai
- Jao Tung-t'ien 饒洞天, 562, 605, 608, 651
- Jao-chou 饒州 in Chiang-nan-tung, 379, 412, 413
- Jao-feng-kuan 饒風關, battle of, 242
- Japan, 250, 429, 440, 441, 445, 464, 475, 493, 494, 495, 497, 500, 501, 502, 504, 505, 507, 514, 519, 521, 523
- Java (She-p'o 閩婆), 442, 444, 494, 502, 504, 507, 510, 515, 516, 518, 519, 520, 523
- Jeffcott, Colin, 179
- jen* 仁 (benevolence, humaneness, humanity), 673, 719, 734
- views of Chang Shih and Chu Hsi, 743
- Jen shuo* 仁說 (Treatises on humaneness), 744
- jen-ch'ing* 人情 (human actualities and emotions), 697
- Jen-tsung 仁宗 (Chao Chen 趙禎, 1010-63, r. 1022-63), 28, 30, 31, 32, 40, 42, 57, 81, 82, 84, 85, 91, 93, 106, 107, 110, 111, 119, 124, 129, 166, 224, 225, 227, 231, 293, 295, 466, 480, 486
- nature of reign, 31
- Jews, 443
- Jih hsin* 日新. *See* *Daily renewal*
- Jih-lo-t'ing 日囉亭 (northern part of the Malay Peninsula), 518
- Joint Manager of Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery. *See* *T'ung chung-shu men-hsia p'ing-ch'ang shih* 同中書門下平章事
- Ju* 儒 (scholars, Confucians), 667, 670, 674, 681, 720
- scholarship, 667
- Ju-chou 潯州 in Kuang-nan-tung, 462
- ju-chung* *hsü-ku* 入中虛估. *See* incentive payments
- ju-hsiang* 乳香. *See* frankincense
- Ju-nei nei-shih sheng* 入內內省事. *See* Palace Eunuch Service
- Ju-Shu chi* 入蜀記 (*Diary of a journey to Szechwan*), 59
- judicial circuit commissioner (*t'i-tien* *hsing-yü kung-shih* 提點刑獄公事), 69
- judicial commissioner (*t'i-tien* *hsing-yü* 提點形獄 or *hsien-ssu* 憲司), 144, 145
- Judicial Control Office (Shen-hsing yüan 審刑院), 116, 154
- judicial inspectors (*ssu-fa ts'an-chün* 司法參軍), 266
- jukō seiji* 朱光青瓷, 498
- Jukō 朱光 (Murata Jukō 村田珠光, 1423-1502), 498

- Jung Hsin-chiang, 448
- Jung-hsien 容縣 (Sung Jung-chou 容州) in Kuang-nan-hsi, 500
- Jurchen 女真, 2, 45, 81, 92, 132, 133, 136, 137, 232, 239, 241, 243, 244, 246, 305, 371, 389, 392, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 419, 431, 434, 477, 727, 735
- conquest of the Sung, 2, 247, 392, 431, 433, 552, 763
- damage to copper mines, 408
- invasion of the Sung, 389, 390, 400, 457
- kai-kuan* 改官 (change in official status, changing office), 50, 56, 65–6, 258
- K'ai-feng 開封 (Northern Sung capital), 4, 22, 87, 107, 116, 121, 132, 145, 158, 160, 179, 188, 198, 199, 200, 201, 217, 218, 225, 227, 233, 237, 241, 242, 244, 247, 272, 278, 292, 296, 303, 305, 330, 338, 339, 364, 368, 380, 381, 382, 383, 386, 389, 392, 399, 403, 462, 465, 478, 505, 547, 554, 632, 642, 752
- K'ai-feng chü-jen*, 297
- K'ai-feng examinations, 291
- schools in, 300
- K'ai-pao li* 開寶禮 (*Code of K'ai-pao rituals*), 289
- K'ai-yüan t'ung-pao 開元通寶 coins, 504
- Kalāh, 444
- Kan River 贛江, 534
- k'an-bo ch'ien* 勘和錢 (search fee), 197
- Kan-chou 贛州, Chiang-nan-hsi, 412, 616
- Kan-shui chen 甘水鎮, 424, 425
- Kan-t'ang Harbor 甘棠港 (Sweet Pears Harbor), 455
- Kanai Noriyuki 金井德幸, 600
- Kansu corridor, 440
- kang* 鋼. *See* iron
- kang* 剛 and *jou* 柔, 702
- Kang Tai 康泰康泰, 446
- kang-ch'ien* 鋼錢. *See* money: iron coins
- kang-shou* 綱首 (shipment and transportation crew leader), 467
- kang-t'ieh* 鋼鐵. *See* iron and steel
- Kao Ch'iu 高俅 (d. 1126), 231
- Kao I-chien 高易簡, 486
- Kao-ling-t'u* 高岭土. *See* ceramics: Kaolin clays
- kao-shen* 告身. *See* patents of office
- Kao-tsung 高宗 (Chao Kou 趙構, 1107–87, r. 1127–62), 42, 81, 82, 85, 86, 90, 92, 95, 96, 100, 105, 115, 117, 119, 120, 132, 133, 135, 136, 172, 231, 238, 240, 241, 242, 456, 475, 613, 636, 639, 732, 733, 737, 739, 741, 752
- k'ao* 考. *See* annual evaluation
- k'ao-k'o* 考課 (performance evaluations), 73
- Kasoff, Ira, xvi, 706
- Katkov, Neil, 583
- Katō Shigeshi 加藤繁 (1880–1946), 209
- Kedah, 495
- kendi* (Chin. *chün-ch'ih* 軍持), Muslim ritual pouring ewers, 494
- keng-p'an* 耕盤. *See* farm tools: tillage trays
- Khitan 契丹, 28, 221, 232, 336, 357, 440
- Khitan Liao 契丹遼, 440
- Khubilai 忽必烈 khan (Sechen khaghan, Shih-tsu 世祖, 1215–94, r. 1260–94) of the Yüan dynasty, 248, 523
- Kiangsu, 441
- Kinsay. *See* Hang-chou
- kinsei* 近時 (modern age), 1

- Kitāb al-Masālik wa'l-mamālik (The book of roads and kingdoms), 443
- Kitāb al-tanbīh wa'l-isrāf (The book of notification and verification), 443
- Kleeman, Terry, 612
- ko* 格 (regulations, quantitative rules), 255, 257, 258
- Ko, Dorothy, 574
- Ko Kho Khao, 494
- Ko-men ssu* 閣門司. *See* Postern Office
- ko-wu* 格物 (investigating things, restraining things), 693
- k'o-chou* 客舟. *See* ships: retainer ships
- k'o-hsiao* 可笑 (joke), 132
- k'o-hu* 客戶 (migrant households), 162
- k'o-kuan* 客觀 (objective), 439
- k'o-shang* 客商. *See* traveling merchants
- k'o-shuai* 科率. *See* taxes: obligatory sale of goods
- Koguryō 高句麗 (37 BC–668 AD), 440
- Koh Kee Heong, 660
- Korea, 250, 445, 464, 475, 493, 494, 495, 497, 500, 501, 504, 508, 510, 521, 522
- trade with China, 478
- Korean merchants, 442
- Koryō 高麗 dynasty (918–1392), 368, 522
- k'ou-fu* 口賦. *See* taxes: head tax
- Kra Isthmus, 442
- Kracke, Edward A., Jr., 14, xvi, 143
- Ku-liang commentary to the Ch'un-ch'iu* (*Ku-liang chuan* 穀梁傳), 289
- ku-pei* 古貝 (ancient name for cotton), 508
- ku-wen* 古文 (ancient style, ancient prose), 10, 635, 637, 667, 668, 672, 675, 677, 680, 681, 682, 684, 689, 694, 698, 699, 726
- k'u* 庫 (storehouses), 235
- k'uai-chi lu* 會計錄 (accounting registers), 86, 140
- kuan* 貫. *See* strings of cash
- Kuan wu nei-p'ien* 觀物內篇. *See* Inner chapters on observing things
- Kuan-chung 關中, 355
- kuan-fu* 官服 (official robes), 50
- kuan-hu* 官戶 (official household, official bondsman), 50, 275
- kuan-mai* 官買. *See* official government purchase
- kuan-p'in* 官品 (personal rank), 50
- kuan-pao* 關報 (linked notification), 108
- kuan-sheng* 官升. *See* promotions
- kuan-t'ien* 官田. *See* government-owned land
- kuan-tzu* 關子. *See* also certificates of deposit, money communicating medium, 210
- kuan-yin* 關引. *See* official transit permits
- kuan-yüan* 官員 (official, functionary, mandarin, or bureaucrat), 49
- kuang yen-lu* 廣言路 (widen the speakers' way), 122
- Kuang-chi 廣濟 River, 202, 380
- Kuang-chou 廣州 (Canton), 5, 202, 421, 434, 441, 442, 444, 447, 448, 454, 456, 460, 462, 464, 465, 470, 471, 474, 475, 476, 480, 481, 482, 490, 492, 497, 498, 499, 500, 512, 513, 520, 534
- Kuang-chou Bay 廣州灣, 498
- Kuang-ma* 廣馬 (Kuang-nan horses), 235
- Kuang-nan circuit 廣南路, 280, 324, 392, 413, 416, 418, 429, 497, 499
- Kuang-nan-hsi circuit 廣南西路, 235, 345, 346, 354, 382, 386, 393, 394, 416, 427, 430, 451, 480, 499, 500
- Kuang-nan-tung circuit 廣南東路, 345, 346, 362, 394, 415, 416, 419, 420, 421, 424, 429, 430, 433, 446, 451, 454, 471, 480, 482, 489, 490, 493

Kuang-pei kung-ch'eng tso 廣備攻城作.

See Siege Provisioning Workshop

Kuang-te Army 廣德軍, 217

Kuang-te commandery 廣德軍 in
Chiang-nan-tung, 365, 412,
614

Kuang-tsung 光宗 (Chao Tun 趙惇,
1147-1200, r. 1189-94), 81,
91, 125, 725

Kuang-tung 廣東, 440, 452, 457, 501,
518, 534

Kuei Wan-jung 桂萬榮 (fl.

1195-1224), 259

Kuei-chou 桂州 (Ching-chiang fu 靜江
府) in Kuang-nan-hsi, 59

kuei-fang 櫃坊. See deposit shops

Kuei-hai yü-beng chih 桂海虞衡志,
449

kuei-nu 鬼奴. See slaves: devil slaves

K'uei-chou circuit 夔州路, 310, 333,
345, 346, 349, 350, 354, 360,
431

Kulottunga, inscription of, 444

Kulu, 503

kundur, Arabic term for frankincense,
510

kung 公. See fairness or impartiality

kung 貢. See government revenues:
tribute

kung-an 公案 introspection, 597

kung-chu 公據. See money: public
certificates

kung-chü 公據. See certificates for
maritime traders: for permission
to sail overseas

kung-chü 貢舉. See examinations

kung-chüan 公卷. See public essays

Kung-nu tsao-chien yüan 弓弩造箭院. See
Bow and Arrow Workshop

Kung-nu yüan 弓弩院. See Bow
Workshop

kung-p'ing 公憑. See certificates for
maritime traders: for permission
to sail overseas

kung-pu 工部. See Ministry of Works

kung-shih chiu 公使酒 (office expense
wine), 188, 195

kung-shih k'u 公使庫 (office expense
treasuries), 188

kung-shih 宮市. See official purchasing

kung-shou 弓手. See army: bowmen

Kung-t'ien fa 公田法. See Public Fields
Law

Kung-yang commentary to the Ch'un-ch'iu
(*Kung-yang chuan* 公羊傳), 289

kung-yin 公引. See official transit permits

K'ung-tzu miao 孔子廟. See Confucian
temples

kuo 國 (state), 725

Kuo Hao 郭浩 (1087-1145), 240

Kuo-hsin so 國信所. See Diplomatic
Office

kuo-shih 國史 (national history), 778

kuo-shui 過稅. See taxes: transit tax

kuo-t'ang 過堂 ("to pass the hall" – visit
the office of the chief counselor),
101

kuo-t'i 國體 (the state body), 37

Kuo-tzu chien. See Directorate of
Education

labor service, 167

rotational labor service (*yao-i* 徭役,
tsa-yao 雜徭), 168

labor services

requisitioned labor services (*ch'ai-i*
差役), 168

Laem Pho (in Chaiya, Surat Thani,
Thailand), 442

Lai-an 來安 Pavillion, 475

Lai-chou 萊州 in Ching-tung-tung,
389, 478

lakewood, 509

Lake T'ai (T'ai-hu 太湖), 334, 365, 395,
426

Lake Tung-t'ing (Tung-t'ing-hu 洞庭
湖), 242

lan-t'ou 欄頭. See clerks: abuses of clerks

- Lan-wu-li 藍無里 (Lambri, North Sumatra), 516
- land guests (*ti-k'o* 地客), 351
- Land Survey and Equitable Tax Law. *See* New Policies: Land Survey and Equitable Tax Policy
- land survey measure (*ching-chieh fa* 經界法), 167
- land tenure, 347
- landlords, 173, 349
control of tenants, 321, 349
domination of villages, 167
large landlords, 348
- Lao-tzu* 老子, 709, 740, 778
- Later Chin 後晉 dynasty (936–47), 222, 251
- Later Chou 後周 dynasty (951–60), 27, 96, 166, 219, 251, 253, 254, 277, 284, 462, 545, 670
- Later Chou Shih-tsung 世宗 (921–59, r. 954–59), 219, 455
- Later Han 後漢 dynasty (947–51), 251, 253, 514
- Later Liang 後梁 dynasty (907–23), 250
- Later Shu 後蜀 (934–65) kingdom, 456
- Later T'ang 後唐 dynasty (923–36), 251, 252, 254, 545
- law
concerning tenants, 349
criminal investigations and inquests, 263
criminal law, 261
in the Five Dynasties, 250
legal literature, 259
legal system, 253
litigation teachers or masters (*sung-shih* 訟士), 560, 561
pettifoggers or private legal advocates, 539, 558, 559, 561, 562, 626, 642, 650, 651
retrial and judicial review, 267
rural law enforcement, 639
in the T'ang, 250, 470, 471
trials, 265
- law searching officials (*chien-fa kuan* 檢法官), 266
- lead and tin, 502
- learning (*hsüeh* 學), 666
- Learning of the Way. *See* *Tao-hsüeh* 道學
- Ledger of merit and demerit of the T'ai-wei immortal, 617
- Lee, Chang Wook, xvii
- Left and Right Courts of the Military Inspector (*Tso yü chün-hsün yüan* 左右軍巡院), 267
- Left Guardian Army for the Imperial Encampment (*Hsing-ying tso-hu chün* 行營左護軍), 240
- Left or Right Chief counselor. *See* *Shang-shu tso/ü p'u-yeh chien men-hsia shih-lang* 尚書左右樸射兼門下侍郎, 100
- Left or Right Counselor-in-Chief, 100
- Lei-chou Peninsula 雷州半島, 445, 520
- lei-sheng-shih* 類省試, special departmental examination in Szechwan, 314
- Leung, Angela, 585
- Levering, Miriam, 598
- Levine, Ari, 634
- Leys, Simon, 49
- li* 例 (precedents), 258
- li* 吏. *See* clerks
- li* 理 (natural patterns, principle), 697, 699, 705, 714, 715, 716, 718, 719, 734, 780
- li* 里. *See* subdistrict
- li* 里 (unit of distance), 188
- Li Ch'ang 李常 (1027–90), 477
- Li Chi-ch'ien 李繼遷 of the Hsi Hsia (963–1004, r. 982–1004), 222
- Li Chieh, 711
- Li Ch'üing 鄺瓊 (1104–53), 240
- Li Cho-ying 李卓穎, 636
- Li Ch'üan 李筌, 455
- Li Fang 李昉 (925–96), 446, 521
- li fa-tu* 立法度 (establish institutions), 689

- Li Hsin-ch'uan 李心傳 (1167-1244),
25, 43, 54, 55, 64, 74, 77, 89,
91, 101, 118, 490, 731, 788
- Li Kang 李綱 (1083-1140), 132, 239,
456, 457, 522
- Li Kou 李構 (1009-59), 490, 678, 680
- Li Mi 李泌 (722-89), 448, 449
- Li Pao 李寶 (d. c. 1165), 245
- Li Shun 李順 (d. 994), 221
- Li T'ao 李燾 (1115-84), 25, 31, 93,
101, 103
- Li T'ung 李侗 (1093-1163), 739, 740,
742
- Li Te-yü 李德裕 (787-850), 48
- li ts'ai* 理財 (managing wealth), 725
- Li Ying-chi 李應機, 480
- Li Yüan-pi 李元弼 (d. 1117), 259, 585
- Li-chi* 禮記. *See Book of rites*
- Li-chou 利州 in Li-chou circuit, 243
- Li-chou circuit 利州路, 346, 431
- li-hun chuang* 離婚狀. *See divorce documents*
- Li-nien t'u* 歷年圖. *See Chronological charts*
- Li-pu* 禮部. *See Ministry of Rites*
- Li-pu shih* 禮部試 (Ministry of Rites examination). *See departmental examination*
- Li-pu t'iao-fa* 吏部條法 (*Statutes of the Ministry of Personnel, Clauses from the legal system of the Ministry of Personnel*), 72
- Li-pu yüan-wai-lang* 禮部員外郎 (Vice Director in the Ministry of Rites), 67, 75
- li-p'u p'ei-mai fa* 立鋪配賣法 (quotas of salt to be sold), 184
- li-sheng* 力勝 tax, 177
- Li-tse Shu-yüan* 麗澤書院 (Beautiful pools academy), 750
- Li-tsung 理宗 (Chao Yün 趙昀,
1205-64, r. 1224-64), 81, 90,
91, 111, 137, 238, 786, 787,
788
- li-wu* 禮物 (presents), 181
- liang* 兩 (ounces), 209
- Liang Keng-yao 梁庚堯, 179, 646
- liang ru wei chu* 量入為出 (determining expenditures by calculating income), 140
- liang ts'ui t'ing* 兩倅廳. *See bureaus of the two controllers-general*
- Liang Wu-ti 武帝 (464-549, r.
502-49), 510
- Liang-che circuit 兩浙路, 343, 344,
349, 354, 360, 363, 372, 382,
388, 397, 410, 413, 415, 418,
429, 430, 451, 456, 458, 471,
477, 480, 783
- Liang-che-hsi circuit 兩浙西路, 339,
344, 345, 346, 386, 388, 395,
413, 417, 421, 426, 433
agriculture and climate, 416
- Liang-che-tung circuit 兩浙東路, 345,
346, 361, 363, 386, 394, 401,
404, 407, 413, 421, 433
- Liang-hsi chi* 梁溪集. *See Collected Works of Mr. Liang-hsi*
- Liang-liao yüan 糧料院. *See Bursary*
- liang-shui fa* 兩稅法. *See taxes: biannual taxes*
- Liao 遼 dynasty (907-1125), 2, 3, 18,
21, 132, 147, 148, 182, 190,
212, 221, 222, 224, 231, 232,
237, 364, 368, 389, 440, 478,
486, 510, 522, 547, 564, 605
- Sung relations with, 182, 223
- Sung trade with, 181, 183
- Sung wars with, 182, 210, 221-2,
223, 224, 229, 231, 232, 238,
245, 291, 458, 488, 738, 741,
788
- threat from as a reason for Ho-pei salt monopoly exemption, 186
- Liao history (Liao-shih* 遼史), 271
- Liao Tao-tsung 道宗 (1032-1101, r.
1055-1101), 237
- Liao Ying-chung 廖瑩中, 570, 578

- Liberal Salaries Law (*Chung-lu fa* 重祿法). *See also* New Policies (Hsin-fa 新法)
- Granaries Policy or Law, 170
- licorice, 182
- Lieh-tzu* 列子, 709
- Lien-chou 連州 in Kuang-nan-tung, 404
- lien-ts'ai ho-pen* 連財合本. *See* commercial partnerships: joint-capital partnerships
- lien-tso* 連坐 (legally responsibility for another's actions), 65
- Lin Chi-chung 林季仲 (d. 1138+), 668
- Lin Chung 林冲, 278
- Lin Li 林栗 (chin-shih 1142), 36, 761
- Lin Ling-su 林靈素, 606
- Lin T'ien-wei 林天蔚, 128, 509
- Lin Ta-chung 林大中 (1131-1208), 125
- Lin, Lee Chor, 508
- Lin-an 臨安 (Southern Sung capital). *See* Hang-chou
- Lin-ch'uan county 臨川縣 in Fu-chou, Chiang-nan-hsi, 647
- Lin-chang county 臨漳縣 in Hsiang-chou 相州, Ho-pei-hsi (modern Henan), 660
- lineage organizations, 629, 656
- linen, 508
- ling* 令 (ordinances, administrative rules, statutes, regulations), 251, 255, 257, 258
- ling* 綾. *See* brocade, damask
- ling* 靈 (power of a god), 614
- Ling Bridge 靈橋, 475
- ling-ch'ih* 凌遲. *See* punishments: death by slicing
- Ling-chou 靈州, battle of, 222
- Ling-wai tai-ta* 嶺外代答, 449, 453, 466, 518
- Lingnan 嶺南, 470
- Literary selections. *See* Wen-hsüan 文選
- literati. *See* *shih-ta-fu* 士大夫
- literati (*shih* 士), 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 32, 34, 35, 38, 40, 41, 42, 52, 55, 56, 58, 64, 79, 90, 92, 93, 94, 97, 104, 112, 125, 130, 280, 284, 287, 290, 291, 297, 303, 305, 307, 309, 311, 312, 315, 316, 317, 318, 320, 528, 529, 543, 549, 551, 554, 557, 559, 564, 590, 594, 597, 600, 608, 610, 612, 613, 620, 621, 633, 636, 650, 653, 654, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 674, 675, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 683, 684, 685, 691, 694, 696, 698, 699, 700, 701, 705, 707, 708, 709, 710, 712, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 734, 750, 760, 763, 764, 769, 775, 782, 787
- authority of, 635
- definition of *shih*, 642
- development of, 665
- ideas about government, 35-42
- involvement in commerce, 652
- local activities, 656
- meaning of the term, 33-4
- recruitment by T'ai-tsung, 670
- related occupations, 558
- shih* stratum, 625, 628
- status in examinations, 643
- as a translation for *shih*, 665
- literati culture, 35, 44, 47, 99, 287
- literature
- early Sung collections, 671
- liu* 留 (hold placed on documents), 40
- Liu An-shih 劉安世 (1048-1125), 111, 756
- Liu Cheng 留正 (1129-1206), 125, 248
- Liu Ch'i 劉錡 (1098-1162), 242
- Liu Chih 劉摯 (1030-97), 39
- Liu Fa 劉法 (d. 1119), 232
- Liu Fu 劉黻 (1217-76), 42
- Liu Guanglin 劉光臨 (William Liu Guanglin), 6

- Liu Heping, 528
 Liu, James T.C. (Liu Tzu-chien 劉子健)
 (1919-93), xvi, 101, 209, 317
 Liu K'ai 柳開 (947-1000), 672
 Liu Kuang-shih 劉光世 (1089-1142),
 240
 Liu P'ien 柳玭, 545, 626
 Liu Pin 劉攽 (1023-89), 690
 Liu Shu 劉恕 (1032-78), 690
 Liu Tsung-yüan 柳宗元 (773-819),
 672, 724
 Liu Tzu-hui 劉子翬 (1101-47), 756
 Liu Yen 劉晏 (715-80), 455
Liu-ching (六經). *See* Six Classics
liu-chung 留中 (hold the report within),
 109
Liu-pu. *See* Six Ministries
 Lo Chün 羅濟 (?-after 1228), 467
 Lo Jung-pang, 456, 462
 Lo Tien 羅點 (1149-94), 582
 Lo, Winston, 652
 Lo-an county 樂安縣 in Fu-chou,
 Chiang-nan-hsi, 647
 Lo-yang 洛陽 (Western capital 西京 of
 the Northern Sung) in
 Ching-hsi-pei, 200, 201, 248,
 321, 693, 716
 local gazetteers (*fang-chih* 方志), 195,
 307, 659
 locked hall examination (*suo-t'ing shih* 鎖
 廳試), 317
 Lorge, Pater, 653
 Lower Yangtze delta, 341, 365, 397,
 399, 417, 419, 426, 435
 Lower Yangtze Valley macroregion
 (Chiang-Che 江浙), 327, 334,
 345, 347, 351, 353, 362, 364,
 371, 372, 380, 394, 397, 421,
 545, 622
lu 路. *See* circuit
 Lu Ah-t'ou 路阿兜, 282
 Lu Chiu-ling 陸九齡 (1132-80), 774
 Lu Chiu-shao 陸九韶 (1120s-90s),
 777
 Lu Chiu-yüan 陸九淵 (1139-93), 355,
 394, 652, 655, 721, 723, 738,
 751, 755, 760, 762, 772, 782,
 784, 788
 Lu Chiu-yüan 陸九淵 (Hsiang-shan 象
 山, 1139-93), 763, 772
 Lu P'i 陸邳, 448
 Lu Shan-wang 路善王, 282
 Lu Yu 陸游 (1125-1210), 59, 393, 401,
 527, 533, 534, 573, 600, 611,
 614
lu-chang 露章 (open drafts), 110
 Lu-chou 廬州 in Huai-nan-hsi, 248
lu-hui 蘆薈. *See* aloe
lu-shih ts'an-chün 錄事參軍. *See*
 executive inspector
lu-yin 路引. *See* certificates for maritime
 traders: for permission to trade
 at locations in China
 lü律 (code, statute), 250, 251, 255
 Lü Hsi-che 呂希哲 (1036-1114), 757
 Lü Hui-ch'ing 呂惠卿 (1032-1111),
 150
 Lü I-chien 呂夷簡 (979-1044), 40, 99
 Lü I-hao 呂頤浩 (1071-1139), 132,
 451
 Lü Kung-tso 呂公著 (1018-89), 127,
 129, 130, 733
 Lü Pen-chung 呂本中 (1084-1145),
 740
 Lü Tsu-ch'ien 呂祖謙 (1137-81), 313,
 723, 738, 740, 745, 749, 751,
 752, 753, 759, 760, 762, 763,
 765, 769, 773, 774, 781, 783,
 785, 787, 788, 789, 790
 and Chu Hsi, 741, 750
 Lü Wen-te 呂文德, 654
 Lü Yung-chung 呂用中, 481
lun-tui 輪對. *See* audiences: revolving
 audience
Lun-yü 論語. *See* Analects
Lung-ch'i shu-t'ang 龍谿書堂. *See*
 Dragon Gorge Academy
Lung-ch'üan. *See* ceramics: *Lung-ch'üan*

- lung-hsien* 龍涎. See ambergris
lung-ku 龍骨. See dragon spines
lung-nao-hsiang 龍腦香. See Borneo camphor
Lung-t'an shu-yüan 龍潭書院. See Dragon Lake Academy
 Lung-wei Army 龍衛軍, 216
lung-yao 龍窯. See dragon kilns
 Luzon, 445
- Ma Tuan-lin 馬端臨 (1254–1323), 251, 252, 288
 Ma Yu-chai 馬裕齋, 561
 Ma-i 麻逸. See Philippine Islands, Philippines
ma-nao 瑪瑙. See achat, agate
Ma-ssu 馬司, *Ma-ssu-chün* 馬司軍. See army: Metropolitan Cavalry Command
ma-ti 馬遞 (mounted relay), 203
 Macauley, Melissa Ann, 561
 Magians, 443
mai-p'u 買撲 (offer-for-bid system or process), 184, 188, 189, 191
 Makino Tatsumi 牧野巽, 257
 Malabar, 516, 520
 Malabar coast, 447, 504
 Malacca, 507
 Malay Peninsula, 442, 444, 447, 502, 510, 514, 515, 518, 519
 Malaysia, 494
man-t'ou 饅頭 type of ceramic firing, 373
 managing wealth. See li ts'ai 理財
 mandated trial (*chao-yü* 詔獄), 84
 Manga in Kenya, 494
 Mantai, 494
Manual on architecture (*Ying-tsoo fa-shih* 營造法式), 711
 manuscript production, 543, 550
Mao commentary on the Book of poetry (*Mao-shih shih-ching* 毛氏詩經), 289
 mapping and cartography, 539, 564
- Maritime Silk Route, 506
 maritime trade, 180, 330, 405, 429, 433, 436, 437, 438, 441, 462, 487
 early Sung policies, 464
 general evaluation, 516
 government encouragement of, 468
 government institutions for, 470
 government supervision of, 479
 maritime trade bureaus (*shih-po wu* 市舶務), 471, 474, 475, 478
 Maritime Trade Commissioner (*shih-po shih* 市舶使), 424, 465, 470, 471, 476
 in the T'ang, 250
 maritime trade offices (*shih-po ssu* 市舶司, lit., "trading ships office"), 181, 465, 466, 467, 468, 470, 471, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 486, 522
 maritime trade routes, 442, 444
 maritime trade superintendencies (*shih-po t'i-chü ssu* 市舶提舉司), 471, 476, 481, 489, 491
 maritime trade superintendent (*shih-po t'i-chü shih* 市舶提舉使), 449, 482, 484, 490, 524
 market
 expansion of the private market, 537
 market exchange bureaus (*shih-i-wu* 市易務), 469, 475
 market towns, 383, 422
 market towns (*chen* 鎮) 106
 markets
 gathering (*hui* 會), 384
 market-place (*shih* 市), 384
 regular and periodic, 379, 421
 shop/hostel (*tien* 店), 384
 store (*p'u* 舖), 384
 Ma'sūdī (896–956), 443
Mathematical treatise in nine sections (*Shu-shu chiu-chang* 數書九章), 405

- McDermott, Joseph, xvi, 4, 5, 17, 548, 549, 562, 580, 586, 587, 588
- McKnight, Brian, xvi, 7, 582, 639
- Meadows of gold and mines of gems*. *See* *Murūj al-dhahab*
- medicinal gharuwood. *See* gharuwood: *yao-ch'en* 藥沈
- medicine, 36
doctors. *See* doctors and physicians
literate medicine, 545
medical knowledge, 559
medical writings, 546
relief clinics, 203
study of, 304
women's medicine (*fu-k'o* 婦科), 570, 575
- medicines, 190, 237, 370, 515, 555
from overseas. *See* *hai-yao* 海藥
shops, 382
- Mediterranean, 506
- Mediterranean Europe, 663
- Mei Yao-ch'en 梅堯臣 (1002–60), 572
memorial (*tsou-i* 奏議), 251, 752
memory passages (*t'ieh* 帖), 288
men-k'o 門客, (house clients), 47
men's medicine (*nan-k'o* 男科), 572
Mencius 孟子 (372–289 B.C.), and the
book by that name, 33, 47, 709, 719, 720, 722, 732, 734, 740, 748, 762, 764, 767, 784
- Meng Kung 孟珙 (1195–1246), 248
- Meng Yü 孟庾, 163
- Meng Yüan-lao 孟元老 (fl. 1126–47), 632
- Meng-liang lu* 夢梁錄 (*Record of the splendors of the capital city*), 573
- merchants
merchant institutions, 403
in the New Policies, 178
participation in the salt monopoly, 185
rice merchants, 186
roles in the market economy, 369
salt merchants, 186
tea merchants, 186, 404
merchants guilds (*hang* 行), 179
mercury, 509
metals. *See also* copper, gold, iron, lead, silver, 501
- Metropolitan Cavalry Command (*Ma-ssu* 馬司, *Ma-ssu-chün* 馬司軍), one of the Three Capital Guards, 215, 218, 243
- Meyer, Ralph, xvii
- Mi-chou 密州 in Ching-tung-tung, 373, 478
- Middle East, 502, 505, 507, 509, 520
- Middle Yangtze Valley macroregion (Ching-hu 荊湖), 327, 333, 334, 345, 347, 351, 361, 362, 379, 380, 385, 407, 413, 418, 419, 429, 431, 432
- Mien-chou 沔州 in Li-chou circuit, 243
mien-hang ch'ien 免行錢. *See* taxes: guild exemption tax
- Mien-i ch'ien* 免役錢. *See* service exemption tax, Service Exemption System
- military (*wu* 武), 654
control of, 8
costs of, 139, 142, 148, 197
directorates of horse pasturages (*mu-chien* 牧監), 235
history of, 220, 238
Household Horse Law (*Pao-ma fa* 保馬法, *Hu-ma fa* 戶馬法), 235
logistics and supply, 235
military law, 219
militia. *See* *pao-chia* 保甲 system
ranking system (*chieh-chi fa* 階級法), 219
size of, 220
in the Southern Sung, 309
weapons production, 233

- Military Affairs Commission (*Shu-mi-yüan* 樞密院), 41, 45, 67, 68, 85, 87, 88, 98, 99, 102, 108, 115, 116, 118, 119, 121, 124, 125, 129, 131, 132, 135, 136, 215, 225, 239, 243, 262. *See also* Bureau of Military Affairs
- Military Affairs Commissioner (*Shu-mi-shih* 樞密使), 41, 99, 100, 137, 227
- military commissioners
chen-fu shih 鎮撫使 in the Southern Sung, 654
chih-chih shih 制置使, 247
ching-lüeh an-fu shih (經略安撫使 or *shuai-ssu* 帥司), 144, 225
- military implements storehouses (*ping-ch'i k'u* 兵器庫), 236
- military inspectors (*chün-hsün shih* 軍巡使), 252
- military officials (*wu-kuan* 武官), 49, 51-2, 53, 225
- military supply storehouses (*chün-tzu k'u* 軍資庫), 236
- military technology, 3
- militiamen (*min-ping* 民兵), 218
- min* 緡 (strings of cash), 466
- Min 閩 kingdom (909-45), 440, 455, 463
- Min-nan 閩南 (Southern Min), 500
- min-ping* 民兵. *See* militiamen
- mind-and-heart. *See* *hsin* 心
- minerals, 518
- ming 命. *See* destiny
- Ming 明 dynasty (1368-1644), 16, 17, 18, 21, 23, 24, 166, 212, 312, 435, 507, 519, 523, 525, 550, 585, 617, 636, 659, 660, 663, 730, 782, 785
- community compact in, 542
- local elites in, 659
- population in the south, 659
- printing in, 544, 548
- revenue collections in, 5, 211
- Ming Yung-lo Emperor 永樂帝 (1360-1424, r. 1402-24), 454, 523
- ming-ching* 明經 (understanding the classics degree), 298
- Ming-chou 明州 (Ch'ing-yüan fu 慶元府) in Liang-che-tung, 197, 390, 396, 400, 401, 402, 413, 422, 423, 427, 433, 445, 451, 453, 454, 456, 471, 475, 476, 490, 495, 496, 500, 501, 519, 555, 629, 657, 776
- Ming-chou 洺州 in Ho-pei-hsi, 358
- ming-fa* 明法 (degree in law), 289
- Ming-kung shu-p'an Ch'ing-ming chi* 名公書判清明集. *See* *Collection of lucid and equitable judgments*
- ming-li* 名例. *See* general principles
- Ming-t'ang* 明堂. *See* Hall of Light
- mining, 141, 190
- Minister-in-Attendance (*Shih-ts'ung* 侍從), 64
- Ministry of Justice (*Hsing-pu* 刑部), 75, 99, 133, 154, 252, 268
- Bureau of Review (*Pi-pu* 比部), 154
- Ministry of Personnel (*Li-pu* 吏部), 40, 50, 65, 68, 99
- appointment process, 68-71
- criticisms of, 71-5
- Minister of Revenue (*Hu-pu shang-shu* 戶部尚書), 154
- Left Vice Minister of Revenue (*Tso-ts'ao shih-lang* 左曹侍郎), 154
- Right Vice Minister of Revenue (*Yu-ts'ao shih-lang* 右曹侍郎), 154
- Ministry of Revenue (*Hu-pu* 戶部), 77, 86, 99, 153, 154, 465, 488
- Granaries Bureau (*Ts'ang-pu* 倉部), 154
- Tax Bureau (*Tu-chih ssu* 度支司), 145, 154
- Treasury Bureau (*Chin-pu* 金部), 154

- Ministry of Rites (*Li-pu* 禮部), 72, 99, 290, 733
- Ministry of Rites examination (*Li-pu shih* 禮部試). *See* departmental examination
- Ministry of War (*Ping-pu* 兵部), 99, 761
- Ministry of Works (*Kung-pu* 工部), 99
- Mirror for deciding cases* (*Che-yü kwei-chien* 折獄龜鑑), 259
- Miscellaneous Characters in four-character lines* (*Ssu-yen tsa-tzu* 四言雜字), 560
- Miscellany of Yu-yang mountains*. *See* *Yu-yang tsa-tzu* 酉陽雜俎
- Mr. *Ch'en's handbook of aromatics* (*Ch'en-shih hsiang-p'u* 陳氏香譜), 509
- Miu Kung-chao, 581
- Mo Tzu-ch'un 莫子純 (1159-1215), 73
- mo-i* 墨義. *See* written elucidations
- mo-k'an* 磨勘 (promotion review, "to grind and examine"), 62, 63, 64-5, 66, 72, 73, 74, 75, 258
- mo-kuan t'ien* 沒官田. *See* confiscated fields
- mo-yen ch'ao* 末鹽鈔 (powder salt vouchers), 186
- Mogadishu, 504
- Moluccas, 514
- money, 517
- bronze cash, 524
 - bronze coins, 486, 490, 501, 518
 - cash vouchers (*ch'ien-yin* 錢引), 210
 - certificates of deposit (*chiaio-tzu* 交子, *bui-tzu* 會子, *kuan-tzu* 關子), 210. *See also* paper currency
 - certificates of deposit shops in Szechwan (*chiaio-tzu p'u* 交子鋪), 210
 - coin prohibitions (*ch'ien-chin* 錢禁), 208
 - copper coins (*t'ung-ch'ien* 銅錢), 6, 78, 182, 183, 378, 379, 385, 408, 489, 490, 504
 - full strings of cash (*tsu* 足, *tsu-mo* 足陌), 208
 - iron coins (*kang-ch'ien* 鋼錢), 210, 486
 - lead coins, 486
 - minting of coins, 191, 207, 209, 378, 408
 - monetary system, 207
 - money supply, 6
 - paper currency (*chiaio-tzu* 交子, *bui-tzu* 會子), 186, 194, 207, 209, 210, 403, 409, 489, 529, 537
 - paper currency inflation, 488
 - Paper Money Office in Szechwan (*Chiao-tzu wu* 交子務), 210
 - public certificates (*kung-chu* 公據), 210
 - short strings of cash (*sheng* 省, *sheng-mo* 省陌), 208
 - Southern Sung monetary problems, 485
 - strings of cash (*min* 緡, *kuan* 貫), 207
- money and commerce, role of
- on ordinary people, 529
- money, social role of, 7, 532
- for painters, 528
 - for poets, 526
 - spirit money and debt, 530
- Möngke 蒙哥 (Hsien-tsong 憲宗 of the Mongol Empire, 1209-59, r. 1251-59), 248
- Mongol conquest, 459
- Mongols, 18, 181, 244, 246, 429, 431, 434, 440, 453, 459, 524, 726, 731, 782, 788
- conquest of the Sung, 392, 552, 763

- monk certificates (*tu-tieh* 度牒), 95, 99, 458, 489, 529, 538, 568. *See also* ordination certificates
prices of, 531
sale of, 599
- Monopoly Exchange Bureau (*Chüeh-i-shu* 權易署 or *Chüeh-i-wu* 權易務), 465
- monopoly exchange bureaus (*chüeh-i-yüan* 權易院), 465, 469
- Monopoly Exchange Office (*Chüeh-i-wu* 權易務), 464, 476
- monopoly office (*chüeh-shu* 權署), 474
- monopoly or commercial tax installations. *See ch'ang-wu* 場務
- Monopoly Tax Commission in K'ai-feng (*Chüeh-huo wu* 權貨務), 198, 465, 476
- monsoon, 441
- moral knowledge (*te-hsing chih chih* 德性之知), 706
- moral principles. *See i-li* 義理
- Morita Kenji 森田憲司, 612
- Mostern, Ruth, 539
- Mou Tsung-san 牟宗三 (1909-95), 748
- Mount Fu-niu 伏牛山, 356
- Mount Lu National School (*Lu-shan kuo-hsüeh* 廬山國學), 290
- Mount Lü-liang 呂梁山, 356
- Mount Lung-hu 龍虎山, 608, 609
- Mount T'ai (T'ai-shan 泰山), 781
- Mount Wu-t'ai 五臺山, 598, 599
- mounted couriers (*tou-ma ch'eng-shou* 走馬承受), 231
- Mozambique, 504
- mu-chien* 牧監. *See* military: directorates of horse pasturages
- Mu-i fa* 募役法. *See* Hired Service System
- mu-pei* 墓碑. *See* tombstone inscriptions
- Mulan Weir, 367
- Mura Jambi, 494
- Murbat, 518
- Murūj al-dhahab (Meadows of gold and mines of gems), 443
- muskwood, 509
- Muslims, 443
- myrrh, 509
- Nagasaki 長崎, 441
- Naitō Torajirō 內藤虎次郎 (1866-1934), (also known as Naitō Konan 內藤湖南), 1, 16, 19-21, 662
- Naitō hypothesis, 34
- Nakhon Si Thammarat, 494
- Nan-an commandery 南安軍 in Chiang-nan-hsi, 412
- Nan-an 南安 county 南安縣 in Ch'üan-chou, Fu-chien, 469, 497, 498
- Nan-chia 南家 and Nan-chia chi-hao 南家記號. *See* Southern Family, Southern Family registry
- nan-chiao* 南郊. *See* suburban sacrifices
- Nan-en-chou 南恩州 in Kuang-nan-tung, 498
- Nan-fang hsiang-lu 南方香錄, 491, 509
- Nan-hai county 南海縣 in Kuang-chou, Kuang-nan-tung, 498
- Nan-hai* 南海. *See* South Seas
- Nan-hsün 南潯, 426
- Nan-k'ang commandery 南康軍 in Chiang-nan-tung, 407, 413, 753
- nan-k'o* 男科. *See* *men*
- Nan-liu River 南流河, 500
- Nan-yüeh 南越, 514
- nao-tzu* 腦子. *See* camphor
- National Palace Museum (Taipei), 82
- natural patterns. *See* *li* 理
- navy, 244, 454, 458
- naval power, 523
- Needham, Joseph, xv, 191, 377, 400
- Nei kung-chien k'u* 內弓箭庫. *See* Palace Archery Storehouse

- Nei tung-men ssu* 內東門司. *See* Palace East Gate Bureau
- nei-chiang* 內降. *See* document processing: directed edicts
- nei-p'i* 內批. *See* document processing: directed edicts
- Nei-sheng* 內省. *See* Palace Domestic Service
- nei-shih* 內侍. *See* palace attendants
- Nei-ts'ang* 內藏. *See* Privy Purse
- Nei-tsang k'u* 內藏庫. *See* Palace Storehouse
- nei-yin* 內引. *See* audiences: inner invitation
- neighboring salt farmers (*yen-ting* 鹽丁, *hsi-hu* 畦戶), 184
- Neo-Confucianism, xvi, 10, 15, 16, 17, 32, 307, 311, 536, 563, 569, 575, 589, 590, 598, 618, 620, 636, 667, 669, 699, 722, 723, 724, 725
- Neskar, Ellen, 619
- New commentaries on the three classics* (*San-ching hsin-i* 三經心意) (of Poetry, Documents, and the Rites of the Chou), 299
- new degree in law. *See* *hsin-k'o ming-fa* 新科明法
- New history of the Five Dynasties* (*Hsin Wu-tai shih* 新五代史), 455, 681
- New Learning (*Hsin-hsüeh* 新學), 708
use in the schools and examinations, 709
- New Meanings of the Rites of Chou, Poetry, and Documents*, 709
- New Policies (*Hsin-fa* 新法), 4, 11, 25, 28, 41, 46, 97, 128, 130, 131, 150, 194, 298, 470, 531, 537, 540, 559, 634, 669, 681, 687, 690, 691, 693, 694, 698, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 720, 721, 722, 724, 726
- Adjustment of Tribute (or equitable transport) Policy (*chiün-shu fa* 均輸法), 150
- Granaries Policy or Law (*Ts'ang fa* 倉法), 151, 170, 188
- Green Sprouts Policy or Farming Loans Policy (*Ch'ing-miao fa* 青苗法), 151, 173, 530, 531, 540, 542, 656, 722
- Hired Service Policy or System (*Mu-i fa* 募役法), 151, 170. *See also* Service Exemption System
- Land Survey and Equitable Tax Policy (*Fang-t'ien chiün-shui fa* 方田均稅法), 152, 166
- Regulations on Land Reclamation and Water Conservancy (*Nung-t'ien shui-li t'iao-yueh* 農田水利條約), 151, 173
- State Trade Policy (*Shih-i fa* 市易法), 151, 165, 178
- New T'ang history*. *See* *Hsin T'ang shu*
- Newly determined regulations, specifications, statutes, and ordinances of the Great Liang* (*Ta-Liang hsin ting ko shih lü ling* 大梁新定格式令), 251
- Ngo Vuong Quyen 吳王權 (898–944, r. 939–44), King of the Ngo kingdom, 223
- Nicobar Islands, 447
- nien-t'ui ch'ien* 年退錢 (regular yearly withdrawal cash), 194
- Nine Classics (*Chiu-ching* 九經), 289, 295
- Nine Provinces (*Chiu-chou* 九州), 281
- Nine-days Mountain (*Chiu-jih-shan* 九日山), 469
- Ning-kuo prefecture 寧國府 in Chiang-nan-tung. 365, 432. *See also* Hsüan-chou,
- Ning-tsung 寧宗 (Chao K'uo 趙擴, 1168–1224, r. 1194–1224), 762, 788

- Niu Ch'eng-ju 牛僧孺 (780–48), 48
 Niu-Li controversy (*Niu Li t'ang-cheng* 牛李黨爭), 48
 non-action. *See wu-wei* 無為
 north China
 changes in land cultivation, 355
 harvests, floods and droughts, 335
 population of, 327, 329
 Northern and Southern dynasties (386–589), 280
 Northern Han 北漢 dynasty (951–79), 182
 Sung conquest of, 221
 Northern Wei 北魏 dynasty (386–534), 282, 362
 Notes on China and India. *See* Akhbār al-Sin wa-l-Hind
 nu 奴 (slave), 275
 nu-pi 奴婢. *See* slaves
 nu-p'u 奴僕. *See* servants or bondservants
 Nung-shu 農書. *See* Agricultural Treatise
 Nung-t'ien shui-li t'iao-yueh 農田水利條約. *See* New Policies:
 Regulations on Land
 Reclamation and Water
 Conservancy
 nutmegs, 509
 o 額 (quotas), 149
 O-chou 鄂州 in Ching-hu-pei, 239, 243, 382, 406, 411
 Oc Eo, 446
 offering (chiao 醺), 610
 office expense cash. *See* salaries of officials: kung-shih ch'ien 公侍錢
 office expense treasuries. *See* kung-shih k'u 公使庫
 office fields (*chih-t'ien* 職田), 76, 175
 Office for Commentaries on the Classics, 709
 Office for Emergencies (*Chi-su fang* 機速房), 132
 Office for the Supervision of State Finances (*Tsung-chih ssu* 聰制司), 163
 Office of Accusation Adjudication (Su-li so 訴理所), 46
 Office of Expenditure Reduction (*Ts'ai-chien chü* 裁減局), 150
 Office of the Imperial Commissioner for the Control and Organization of the Coastal Areas (*Yen-bai chih-chih shih-ssu* 沿海制置使司), 457, 458
 office servicemen (*ya-ch'ien* 衙前), 169, 188
 official. *See* kuan-yüan
 official bondsman. *See* kuan-hu 官戶
 official government purchase (*kuan-mai* 官買), 461
 official household. *See* kuan-hu 官戶
 official purchasing (*kung-shih* 官市 or *shou-shih* 收市), 461
 official register (*pan-pu* 班簿), 50
 official salaries (*feng-lu* 俸祿), 75–8
 official transit permits (*ch'ang-yin* 長引, *kung-yin* 公引, *kuan-yin* 關引), 177
 officialdom
 group portrait of, 80
 size of, 52–4
 officials who search and sentence (*chien-tuan kuan* 監斷官), 266
 Oka Motoshi 岡元司, 629
 Okinawa, 495
 Old Cairo, 495
 Oman, 444
 “On literati learning” (*Shih-bsüeh* 士學), 725
 “On parties” (*P'eng-tang lun* 朋黨論), 678
 “On the Origin of the Way” (*Yüan tao* 原道), 675
 operas, 529
 operations (*ying-yün* 營運), 407
 ordinances. *See* ling

- Original meanings of the Book of poetry*
(*Shih pen i* 詩本義), 695
- Original meaning of the Chou dynasty Book of changes*. See *Chou I pen-i* 周易本意
- Ōsawa Masaaki 大澤正昭, 362
- Ou-yang Hsiu 歐陽修 (1007–72), 11, 32, 33, 38, 85, 104, 105, 106, 108, 128, 130, 213, 337, 455, 547, 550, 636, 669, 677, 678, 680, 681, 695, 697, 699, 706, 711, 712, 758
- debate with Ssu-ma Kuang on examinations, 295
- on political faction, 634
- on secret memorials, 40, 634
- overland trade, 181, 437
- overseas trade. See maritime trade
- overseer generals (*tsung-ling* 總領), 479
- Owen, Stephen, 584
- pa* 霸. See hegemony
- pa p'an-kuan chih ming* 罷判官之名 (terminate the office of administrative assistant), 479
- pa-hsing* 八行. See eight virtues method of selection
- Pa-shih wan chin-chün* 八十萬禁軍, 278
- Pacification Cash Office (*Ching-chih ssu* 經制司), 163
- pacification commissioner (*ching-chih shih* 經制使, *hsüan-fu shih* 宣撫使), 162, 245, 247, 459
- pacification expenditures, 162
- Paekche 百濟 (18 BC–AD 660), 440
- pai-ch'i* 白契 (“white contracts” – private deeds for real estate), 197, 283
- pai-kuan ta ch'i-chü* 百官大起居. See audiences: grand obeisance
- Pai-lu-tung shu-yüan* 白鹿洞書院. See White Deer Grotto Academy
- Pai-niang, 555
- pai-tz'u* 白瓷. See ceramics: white wares, white-glazed porcelain
- Painting Academy (*Hua-hsiieh* 畫學), 528, 710
- Pakistan, 500
- Palace Archery Storehouse (*Nei kung-chien k'u* 內弓箭庫), 236
- palace attendants (*nei-shih* 內侍), 470, 479
- Palace Bureau of the Commander-in-chief (*T'ien-ch'ien tu chih-hui shih ssu* 殿前都指揮使司), 214
- Palace Construction Section (*Hsiu-tsao an* 修造案), 153
- Palace Domestic Service (*Nei-sheng* 內省, *Shang-shu nei-sheng* 尚書內省), 87, 88–9, 90, 92
- Communications Office (*Ssu-yen* 司言), 89
- inner councilors (*nei-tsai* 內宰), 89
- Records Office (*Ssu-chi* 司記), 89
- Palace East Gate Bureau (*nei tung-men ssu* 內東門司), 86, 87
- Palace Eunuch Service (*ju-nei nei-shih sheng* 入內內事省), 87, 88, 123
- palace examination (*tien-shih* 殿試, *yü-shih* 御試), 57, 290, 314, 315
- Palace Inspectorate-general (*T'ien-ch'ien tu tien-chien ssu* 殿前都點檢司), 214
- palace of the heir apparent (*tung-kung* 東宮), 87
- Palace Storehouse (*Nei-tsang k'u* 內藏庫), 86
- Palawan, 445, 494
- pan* 班 (group), 119
- Pan Ku 班固 (32–92), 446
- Pan-ch'iao-chen 板橋鎮 in Mi-chou 密州, Ching-tung-tung, 477
- pan-chih-bua* 斑枝花 (alternative name for cotton in Chinese), 508
- pan-pu* 班簿. See official register
- P'an Chih 潘植 (early 12th century), 756

- P'an Mei 潘美 (921-87), 465
p'an-kuan 判官 (administrative assistant or staff supervisor), 42, 267, 470
P'an-yü county 番禺縣 in Kuang-chou, Kuang-nan-tung, 498
pao 保 (pledge of surety, security group), 73, 228
Pao Hui 包恢 (1182-1268), 405, 490, 533
pao-chia militia system. *See pao-chia* system
pao-chia 保甲 system, 171, 174, 199, 228, 261, 542
horse raising requirement, 235
officers, 655
security group. *See pao* 保 (pledge of surety, security group)
ta-pao 大保 (big *pao*), 199
ta pao-chang 大保長 (large security group head), 262
tu-pao 都保 (superior security group), 199
tu-pao cheng 都保正 (superior security group head), 262
tu-pao cheng 都保副正 (assistant superior security group head), 262
Pao-ch'ing Ssu-ming chih 寶慶四明志, 467
Pao-ma fa 保馬法. *See* military: Household Horse Law
paper, 522
Parallel cases under the pear tree (T'ang-yin *pi-shih* 堂陰比事), 259
Parhae. *See* Po-hai
Participant in Determining Governmental Affairs. *See* Ts'an-chih cheng-shih 參知政事
patents of office (kao-shen 告身), 50
patrolling inspectors (*hsün-chien* 巡檢), 262, 263
pearls (*chen-chu* 真珠), 520
Pearson, Richard, 496
Pei-hsi tzu-i 北溪字義 (*Terms explained*), 783
Pei-liu River 北流河, 500
Pei-t'ing 北庭, 448
Pei-wei Army 背嵬軍, 240
p'ei-mai 配賣. *See* taxes: obligatory sale of goods
Pen-ts'ao kang-mu 本草綱目 (*Compendium of materia medica*), 519
Penal conspectus of the Great Chou (Ta Chou *hsing-t'ung* 大周刑統), 7, 251
penal registration (*pian-kuan* 編管), 277
P'eng-hu 澎湖 islands, 496
P'eng-jih Army 捧日軍, 216
P'eng-tang lun 朋黨論. *See* On parties
pepper, 453, 509, 515, 529
pepper grains, 509
performance evaluations. *See* *k'ao-k'o* 考課
Persian and Arab merchants (*Hsi-yü shang* 西域商), 180, 438, 442, 492
Persian and Arab ships (*Hsi-yü bo* 西域舶), 441, 460
Persian Gulf, 430, 441, 447, 504, 506, 508, 520
personal rank. *See* *kuan-p'in* 官品 (personal rank)
personal retainer. *See* *pu-ch'ü* 部曲
Peterson, Willard, xvii
Petition almanac of red pine (*Ch'ih-sung-tzu chang-li* 赤松子章曆), 531
Petroleum ('Raging Fire Oil') Shop, 234
Philippine Islands (Ma-i 麻逸), 429, 442, 444, 445, 494, 500, 502, 503, 520
physicians, 558
Pi-pu 比部. *See* Ministry of Justice: Bureau of Review
Pi-yung 辟雍 (University's outer hall in the Three Hall System), 301

- p'i-li-p'ao* 霹靂炮. *See* rudimentary fragmentation bombs
- pieb-shih* 別試. *See* avoidance examination for departmental examination
- pieb-t'ou shih* 別頭試. *See* avoidance examination
- pieb-yüan-shih* 別院試. *See* avoidance examination for departmental examination
- Pien Canal 汴河, 145, 147, 155, 157, 158, 160, 198, 201, 202, 203, 381
annual grain quotas, 201
- pien feng-su* 變風俗 (change customs), 689
- Pien River 汴河, 381
- pien-ch'ih* 編敕. *See* collected edicts
- pien-kang* 汴綱 (convoys on the Pien Canal), 201
- pien-kuan* 編管. *See* penal registration
- pien-lü ssu* 編律司. *See* archive-secretariat of counties
- Pien-ti* 便糴. *See* Expedient Grain Purchase Policy
- pien-ti liang-ts'ao chiao-yin* 便糴糧草交引. *See* exchange vouchers
- pin-t'ieh* 賓鐵. *See* iron: fine iron;
See steel
- p'in* 品 (grade, rank, level), 49
- pine (*sung-shu* 松樹), 451
- ping-ch'i k'u* 兵器庫. *See* military implements storehouses
- Ping-ma ta-yüan-shuai fu* 兵馬大元率府. *See* General Marshal Headquarters
- Ping-pu* 兵部. *See* Ministry of War
- P'ing Huai-hsi pei 平淮西碑. *See* Stele for Pacifying Huai-hsi
- p'ing-chang chün-kuo chung shih* 平章軍國重事 (manager of military and national issues, manager of important national security matters), 129, 246
- P'ing-chiang fu 平江府. *See* Su-chou 蘇州
- P'ing-chou k'o-t'an* 萍州可談, 449, 481, 493
- placement examination (*ch'üan-shih* 銓試), 287
- po* 舶 (ocean-going junk), 446
- po-chiao* 舶腳. *See* anchorage tax
- Po-hai 渤海 (Parhae, 698–927), 440, 441
- po-hsüeh hung-tz'u* 博學宏詞. *See* Erudite Literatus degree
- Po-ni 勃泥. *See* Borneo
- po-ssu pai-fan* 波斯白礬 (white kind of alum), 519
- po-ti* 博糴 (barter of surplus commodities for grain), 199
- po-tieh* 白疊 (alternate name for cotton), 508
- p'o-fen* 破分 (“broken part”—portion of taxes kept by local governments), 195
- p'o-ko* 破格 (non-standard positions), 70
- P'o-yang Lake 鄱陽湖, 333, 346, 359, 360, 410, 412
- poetic capital (*shih-pen* 詩本), 528
- poetry (*shih* 詩 and *fu* 賦), 288, 298, 313
as one of two kinds of *chin-shih* exams, 300
- Pohai Coast (Po-hai-wan 渤海灣), 330, 445
- police chiefs (*hsiin-chien* 巡檢), 218
- police inspectors (*ssu-li ts'an-chün* 司理參軍), 263
in prefectures, 267
- policemen (*shih-ch'en* 使臣), 244
- policies of the ancestors. *See* tsu-tsung chih-fa
- policy discussion questions (*ts'e* 策), 288, 313
- political faction (*tang* 黨), fellowship, 46–8, 634, 759

- Polo, Marco (c. 1254-1324), 451, 515
- pongee (*chiian* 絹), lower quality silk cloth, 506
- Poon, Ming-sun, 545, 546, 547, 549, 550
- population, 4, 155, 325, 411, 434
 AD 2 to 1190, 328
 by circuit, 330
 late Sung changes, 430
 mid-Sung changes, 385
 north versus south China, 328
 regional variations, 329
 T'ang to Sung growth, 326
- Postern Office (Ko-men ssu 閤門司), 109, 114
- Powers, Martin, 528
- practice of the equilibrium. *See chung-yung* 中庸
- Prambanan, 494
- preceptors (*chiaio-shou* 教授), 294, 300, 306
- Precepts for social life. See Yüan-shih shih-fan* 袁氏世範
- precious stones, 518
- prefects (*chih-chou* 治州), 51, 481, 490
- prefectural administrator (*chih-fu* 治府), 647
- prefectural court (*chou-yüan* 州院), 267
- prefectural examinations (*chieh-shih* 解試) or qualifying examination, 9, 292, 317
 ages of candidates, 313
 graduates of, 314
 quotas for, 296
- prefectural judges (*t'ui-kuan* 推官), 267
- prefectural schools (*chou-hsiieh* 州學), 9, 294, 301, 303, 306, 541, 624, 710
- prefectures (*chou* 州, *fu* 府), 141, 286
- Prescriptions worth a thousand* (*Pei-chi ch'ien-chin yao-fang* 備急千金要方), 571
- presented scholar degree. *See chin-shih* 進士
- primary schools (*hsiao-hsiieh* 小學), 301, 709
- printing, 172, 539, 542, 544, 550-9
 block (or woodblock) printing, 544, 546
 cheaters' texts (for the examinations), 550
 handbill, 557
 handbills, pamphlets and posters, 554
 impact on culture and poetry, 562
 maps, 564
 Ma-sha editions 麻沙本, 552, 553
 movable type, 544
 private calendars, 545
 private newspaper printers, 538
 private noncommercial printers, 552
 requirements for block printing, 547
 Sung and Ming compared, 548
 T'ang origins of, 543
- private salt producers (*t'ing-hu* 亭戶, *tsao-hu* 灶戶), 184
- Privy Purse (*Nei-ts'ang* 內藏), 193, 725
 loans and grants from, 193
- promotion review. *See mo-k'an* 磨勘
- promotions (*kuan-sheng* 官升), 258
- protection privilege (*yin* 蔭), 9, 47, 52, 54, 55-7, 62, 79, 83, 135, 287, 319, 652, 653, 699
- prototypes of guns. *See t'u-huo ch'iang* 突火槍
- provincial military governorships. *See chieh-tu-shih*
- pu* 步 (paces), 283
- pu-chiang* 部將. *See* troop commanders
- pu-ch'ü* 部曲 (personal retainer, semi-servile retainer), 275, 403
- Pu-ssu* 步司. *See* army: Metropolitan Infantry Command
- pu-ti* 步遞 (foot relay), 203
- pu-wang* 捕亡. *See* arrests and escapes
- p'u* 舖. *See* markets: store
- p'u* 僕. *See* servants or bondservants

- P'u Shou-keng 蒲壽庚 (1205-90), 181, 459, 483
- P'u-ch'eng county 浦城縣 in Chien-chou (Chien-ning fu), Fu-chien, 648
- p'u-hu* 鋪戶. *See* shopkeeper households
- P'u-t'ien county 莆田縣 in Hsing-hua commandery, Fu-chien, 495, 498
- P'u-tuan 蒲端, 515
- P'u-yüan 濮院, 426
- public essays (*kung-chüan* 公卷), 293
- Public Fields Law (*Kung-t'ien fa* 公田法), 167
- public opinion
 kung-i 公議, 38-9
 yü-lun 輿論, 642
- Public Petitioners Drum Office (*Teng-wen ku-yüan* 登聞鼓院), 37
- Public Petitioners Review Office (*Teng-wen chien-yüan* 登聞檢院), 123
- public relief, 203, 204
- public-use money. *See* salaries of officials:
 kung-shih ch'ien 公侍錢
- punishments, 269
 death by slicing (*ling-ch'ih* 凌遲), 271
 Five Punishments (*Wu-hsing* 五刑), 265, 270
- purchase of silk (*bo-mai* 和買). *See also* harmonious purchase, 199
- putchuk, 509
- Qoço, 519
- qualifying examination. *See* prefectural examinations
- Rajasthan, 503
- Ray, Haprasad, 508
- Record of dreaming of Hua in the Eastern Capital*, A (*Tung-ching meng-hua lu* 東京夢華錄), 633
- Record of examining the past* (*Chi-ku lu* 稽古錄), 690, 691
- Record of the listener*, *See* *I-chien chih* 夷堅志
- Recorded conversations of Hsieh Liang-tso* (*Shang-ts'ai yü-lei* 上蔡語類), 739
- Records of the evolution of the I-Lo school of the two Ch'engs*. *See* *I-Lo yüan-yüan lu* 伊洛淵源錄
- Records of the historian* (*Shih-chi* 史記), 289
- records of words (*yü-lu* 語錄), 619
- recruitment, methods of, 287
- red contracts (*hung-ch'i* 紅契, *ch'ih-ch'i* 赤契), 283
- Red River, 518
- Red Sea, 493, 507
- Reeve, Michael, xvii
- Reflections on things at hand* (*Chin-ssu lu* 近思錄), 757, 785
- regiment. *See* *pu* 部 and *ying* 營
- regulations. *See* *ling*; *see ko*
- religion, 15-16, 80
 deity worship, 610
 enfowment of gods, 612
 laicization of, 596
 place god (*t'u-ti shen* 土地神), 615
 state sponsorship of, 541
- remonstrance, 112
- reserve general (*chun-pei Chiang* 準備將), 240
- restraining things. *See* *ko-wu* 格物
- rhinoceros horn (*hsi-chiao* 犀角), 181, 444, 475, 516, 518
- rice production, 326, 334, 344, 351, 359, 361, 393, 396, 434
- Richthofen, Ferdinand von, 437
- righteous separation. *See* *i-chüeh* 義絕
- righteousness (*i* 義), 673
- rite master (*fa-shih* 法師), 608
- Rites of the Chou* (*Chou-li* 周禮), 11, 289, 299, 313, 686, 706, 707, 709
- Rockhill, W. W., 510

- Roman Catholic church, 506
 Roman Empire (Ta Ch'in 大秦), 21, 519
 rudimentary fragmentation bombs (*p'i-li-p'ao* 霹靂炮), 457
 rural district (*hsiang* 鄉), 423
 Ryūkyūs, 495, 519
- Sabah, 445
 Saeki Tomi 佐伯富 (1910–2006), 185
 sage (*sheng-jen* 聖人), 673, 677, 682, 684, 685, 687, 688, 694, 699, 700, 707, 709, 718
 Sakieda Akasaki site in Ishigaki Island, 504
 Sakishima Islands, 504
 salaries of officials
 base salary (*ch'ing-shou* 清受), 76
 kung-shih ch'ien 公侍錢 (public use money, office expense cash, prefectural office expense cash), 77, 188, 195
 supplements to salary (t'ien-chih ch'ien 添支錢), 76
 salt, 529
 Salt and Iron Monopoly Bureau (*Yen-t'ieh ssu* 鹽鐵司), 145, 233
 Salt and Iron Office (*Yen-t'ieh pu* 鹽鐵部), 153
 salt distribution by private merchants for south China (*ch'ao-yen fa* 鈔鹽法, *t'ung-shang fa* 通商法), 202
 salt policies
 Family Wealth Salt Policy (*Ch'an-yen fa* 產鹽法), 184
 Purchase by Number of Individuals Salt Policy (*chi-k'ou mai-yen fa* 計口買鹽法), 184
 Silkworm Salt Policy (*Ts'an-yen fa* 蠶鹽法), 184
 Samarra, 494
san pu ch'u 三不出 ("three bars to separation" for divorce), 277
san-ch'i hao 三七耗 (three-seven supplement), 160
San-ching hsin-i 三經心意. *See New commentaries on the three classics*
San-chuan (Three commentaries on the Spring and autumn annals 三傳), 289
 San-ch'uan-k'ou 三川口, battle of, 224
 San-fo-ch'i 三佛齊. *See Srīvijaya*
San-fo-ch'i fan-shou 三佛齊番首 (Srīvijayan merchants' chief), 503
San-Li (Three classics of the rites 三禮), 289
san-she 三舍 (three halls), 300
San-she-fa 三舍法. *See Three Hall System*
San-sheng 三省. *See Three Departments*
San-shih (The three histories 三史), 289
San-ssu 三司 (Three Offices). *See Finance Commission*
San-ssu fu-shih 三司副使. *See Finance Vice Commissioner*
San-ssu p'an-kuan 三司判官. *See Finance administrative assistants*
San-ssu shih 三司使. *See Finance Commissioner*
San-tai 三代. *See Three Dynasties of antiquity*
San-wei 三衛. *See army: Three Capital Guards*
 sandalwood, 509
 Sangihe islands, 445
 sappan wood (*su-mu* 蘇木), 444, 509, 515
 Sarawak, 495
 Sargent, Stuart, 562, 563, 564
 Satingpra, 495, 502
 satins, 507
 scent-holders of ivory (hsiang-tieh 象疊), 519
 Schirokauer, Conrad, xv
 Schlutter, Morten, 598
 Schöffel, I., 535

- scholar-officials. *See* gentlemen
- scholar-officials (*shih-ta-fu* 士大夫), 9,
293, 368, 407, 621, 640, 727,
729, 730, 732, 760, 762, 790
- schools, 295
 academies. *See* academies
 during the Ch'ing-li reforms, 294
 government schools, 17, 286, 294,
 300, 307, 665, 753
 in the early Sung, 290
 Three Hall System. *See* Three Hall
 System
- Schottenhammer, Angela, xvi, 5, 6, 477,
503, 640
- Science and civilization in China*, xv
- Scripture on the Grant of Life from the
 Celestial Treasury, Spoken by the
 Heavenly Venerable of Numinous
 Treasure*, 530, 531
- Scripture on the loan of life, 616
- Secretariat (*chung-shu sheng* 中書省),
31, 37, 41, 42, 68, 98, 150
- Secretariat Drafter. *See* *chung-shu
 she-jen*
- Secretariat-Chancellery (*Chung-shu
 men-hsia* 中書門下), 39, 41,
87, 98, 99, 100, 104, 116, 118,
119, 121, 123, 124, 126, 128,
134, 135, 136, 251, 268
 Bureau of Edicts (*chih-ch'ih yüan* 制
 敕院), 99
 Five Offices (*Wu fang* 五房), 99
- Sedo, Timothy, 660
- selected incense. *See* frankincense:
 chien-hsiang 揀香
- selection examinations (*hsüan-chü* 選舉),
54
- selection men. *See* *hsüan-jen*
- Selections from refined literature* (*Wen hsüan*
 文選), 672
- Self admonitions for local administrators*
 (*Tso-i tzu-chen* 作邑自箴), 259
- semi-servile retainers. *See* *pu-ch'ü*
- Sen, Tansen, 468
- senior officials (*chang-kuan* 長官), 215
- servants or bondservants (*p'u* 僕, *nu-p'u*
 奴僕, *tien-p'u* 佃僕), 349,
350
- Service Exemption System (*Mien-i ch'ien*
 免役錢), 170, 407. *See also*
 Hired Service System
- service exemption tax (*mien-i ch'ien* 免役
 錢), 170
- servitors major. *See* *ta shih-ch'en*
- Sha-hua-kung 沙華公, 520
- shan 杉. *See* China fir
- Shan-hsi Army 陝西軍, 239
- Shan-hsi circuit 陝西路, 144, 155, 174,
224, 225, 227, 230, 231, 235,
239, 245, 356
- shan-hsing* 擅興. *See* unauthorized corvée
 and levies
- shan-hu* 珊瑚. *See* coral
- Shan-tung 山東, 338, 478
- Shan-yüan treaty (*Shan-yüan chih meng*
 澶淵之盟), 28, 182, 223
- Shang-kuan Chün 上官均
 (1038-1115), 73
- shang-kung* 上供 (sent to the capital),
467
- shang-kung ch'ien* 上供錢 (tax payments
 destined for the central
 government), 164
- Shang-shu nei-sheng* 尚書內省. *See* Palace
 Domestic Service
- Shang-shu sheng*. *See* Department of State
 Affairs
- Shang-shu tso/zu p'u-yeh chien men-hsia*
 shih-lang 尚書左右樞射兼門下
 侍郎. *See* Left or Right Chief
 Councilor
- shang-shui* 商稅. *See* taxes: commercial
 tax
- Shang-ts'ai yü-lei* 上蔡語類. *See* Recorded
 conversations of Hsieh Liang-tso
- Shangga in Kenya, 494
- Shanghai-chen 上海鎮 in Hsiu-chou,
 Liang-che-hsi, 476

- Shantung, 273, 356, 368, 386, 397,
426, 441, 443, 451
shao 少 (minor or falling), 702
Shao Po-wen 邵伯溫 (1057-1134), 701
Shao Yung 邵雍 (1011-77), 11, 693,
701, 756, 757
Shao-chou 韶州 in Kuang-nan-tung,
379
Shao-hsing fu 紹興府 (Yüeh-chou 越
州) in Liang-che-tung, 59, 369,
396, 411, 413, 420, 422
Shao-wu commandery 邵武軍 in
Fu-chien, 415, 433
Shao-yang county 邵陽縣 in Shao-chou,
Ching-hu-nan, 644
sbe 社 or *sbe-hui* 社會. *See* societies
sbe-ch'üeh 射闕 (shooting for vacancies),
50, 70
She-p'o 閻婆. *See* Java
shen 神 (spiritual intuition of unity),
688, 705
Shen Fu 沈复 (1763-1825), 574
Shen Kua 沈括 (1031-95), 39, 236,
544, 560, 561, 711
Shen Nung 神農 (one of the three
monarchs in ancient time), 678
Shen Te-fu, 211
shen-chou 神舟. *See* ships: sacred ships
Shen-ch'üan county 神泉縣 in
Mien-chou, Ch'eng-tu-fu
circuit, 431
Shen-hsiao 神霄. *See* Taoism: Divine
Empyrean
Shen-hsing yüan 審刑院. *See* Judicial
Control Office
Shen-kuan yüan 審官院. *See* Bureau of
Personnel Evaluation
shen-ming 申明 (explanatory edicts),
257, 258
shen-pei kung 神臂弓. *See* crossbows:
strong-armed bow
shen-tao pei 神道碑. *See* stone stele
shen-ting chien/mi 身丁錢/米. *See* taxes:
head tax
Shen-tsung 神宗 (Chao Hsü 趙頊,
1048-85, r. 1067-85), 23, 28,
31, 35, 36, 39, 41, 48, 49, 76,
78, 90, 91, 97, 110, 117, 119,
125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130,
133, 150, 155, 173, 193, 218,
226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231,
233, 244, 257, 258, 296, 298,
299, 300, 470, 479, 480, 681
Shen-tsung shih-lu 神宗實錄 (*Shen-tsung*
veritable records), 49
Shen-wei Army 神衛軍, 216
sheng 省, *sheng-mo* 省陌. *See* money:
short strings of cash
sheng-chih 聖旨 (imperial will), 256
sheng-chih 聖旨. *See* imperial will
Sheng-hsien 嵯縣 in Yüeh-chou 越州,
Liang-che-tung, 500
sheng-jen 聖人 (sages), 152
Sheng-jen chih tao 聖人之道. *See* Way of
the Sages
sheng-shih 省試. *See* departmental
examination
sheng-yüan 生員. *See* examination
licentiates
Shiba Yoshinobu 斯波義信, xvi, 3, 528
Shields, Anna, 636
shih 勢 (events), 696
shih 詩. *See* poetry
Shih 世, 703
shih 市. *See* markets: market-place
shih 式 (specifications), 251, 256, 257,
258
Shih Chieh 石介 (1005-45), 678, 681
Shih Chin 石進, 282
shih ju 世儒 (conventional Confucians),
729
Shih Mi-yüan 史彌遠 (1164-1233), 90,
91, 136, 137, 138, 247, 635,
657, 786, 788
Shih O 石謬 (1058-1112), 75
Shih pen i 詩本義. *See* *The original*
meanings of the Book of poetry, or
songs

Shih yü-shih 侍御史. *See* Censorate:

Attendant Censor

shih-ch'en 使臣. *See* policemen

Shih-chi 史記 (*The grand scribe's records, Records of the historian*), 37

shih-chin 時進 (seasonal offerings), 461

shih-feng 實封, (sealed memorial), 122

Shih-hsüeh 士學. *See* On literati learning

Shih-i fa 市易法. *See* New Policies: State Trade Policy

shih-i-wu 市易務. *See* market exchange bureaus

shih-jen 士人, 642, 651

shih-k'o 石刻. *See* stone inscriptions

Shih-ku shu-yüan 石鼓書院. *See* Stone Drum Academy

Shih-kuan 史館. *See* State History Office

Shih-kuo ch'un-ch'iu 十國春秋 (*Spring and autumn of the Ten Kingdoms*), 464

shih-liu 士流 (gentlemanly sort), 642

shih-oriented culture, 14

shih-pen 詩本. *See* poetic capital

Shih-po shih 市舶使. *See* Maritime Trade Commissioner

shih-po ssu 市舶司. *See* Maritime trade offices

shih-po t'i-chü ssu 市舶提舉司. *See*

maritime trade superintendency

shih-po wu 市舶務. *See* maritime trade bureaus

shih-shih 世世, 703

shih-ta-fu 士大夫, 9, 22, 33, 34, 44, 79, 101, 133, 293, 368, 407, 570, 621, 640, 727, 729, 730, 732, 760, 762, 790. *See also* scholar-officials, gentlemen, literati

culture of, 553

under Jen-tsung, 32

Shih-ts'ung 侍從. *See* Minister-in-Attendance

Shih-wei ch'in-chün 侍衛親軍. *See* army: Imperial Bodyguard

Shih-wei ch'in-chün ma-chün tu-chih-hui shih ssu 侍衛親軍馬軍/步軍都指揮使司. *See* Imperial Bodyguard Cavalry Bureau of the Commander-in-chief

ships

construction and transport, 400, 455

retainer ships (k'o-chou k'o-chou 客舟), 452

sacred ships (*shen-chou* 神舟) of ambassadors, 452

ship building, 450

shipwrecks, 445

shopkeeper households (*p'u-bu* 鋪戶), 184

shou-hsiang 首相 (senior chief councilor), 45

shou-shih 收市. *See* official purchasing

Shu-ching 書經. *See* Book of documents

shu-chuang 熟狀 (routine petition), 119

Shu-mi shih 樞密使. *See* Military Affairs Commissioner

Shu-mi yüan. *See* Military Affairs Commission, Bureau of Military Affairs

Shu-p'an 書判 (written judgments), 260

Shu-shu chiu-chang 數書九章. *See* Mathematical treatise in nine sections

shu-yüan 書院. *See* academies

shuai-ssu 帥司. *See* military commissioner

shui-ch'ang 稅場. *See* commercial tax offices

shui-ch'ien 稅錢 (tax cash). *See* summer tax

shui-chüan 稅絹 (tax silk). *See* summer tax

Shui-hu chuan 水滸傳. *See* The water margin

shui-wu 稅務. *See* commercial tax offices

Shun 舜 (one of the five emperors in ancient time), 678

- Shun-ch'ang county 順昌縣) in
Nan-chien-chou, Fu-chien, 411
- Shun-ch'ang-fu 順昌府 (Ying-chou 潁
州) in Ching-his-pei, 242
- Siam, 507
- Siege Provisioning Workshop (*Kuang-pei
kung-ch'eng tso* 廣備攻城作),
233
- Sikkim, 503
- silk. *See* textiles: silk
silk fabrics, 444
- Silk Route, 437
- Silla 新羅 kingdom (57 BC–AD 935),
440
- Silla Quarters (*Silla fang* 新羅坊), 441
- silver, 7, 20, 147, 156, 182, 186, 194,
209, 505, 529
- Sinan shipwreck, 495
- Sinkiang, 440
- Sinori (Hokkaidō), 504
- Sirāf, 444, 495
- Six Classics (*Liu-ching* 六經), 734
- Six Dynasties (222–589), 21, 107, 120,
638, 675
- Six Ministries (*Liu-pu* 六部), 56, 75, 88,
99–100, 101, 102, 104, 127,
132, 133
- Six records of a floating life* (*Fou-sheng
liu-chi* 浮生六記), 574
- Six-fold statutes of T'ang* (*T'ang liu-tien* 唐
六典), 99
- slave. *See* nu 奴
- slaves (*nu-pi* 奴婢), 520
black slaves, 520
devil slaves (*kuei-nu* 鬼奴), 520
K'un-lun slaves (*K'un-lun nu* 崑崙奴),
521
yeh-jen 野人, 520
- Smith, Paul Jakov, xvi, 640, 649
- societies (*she* 社 or *she-hui* 社會), 614
- Society for Truth and Sincerity
(*Chen-shuai hui* 真率會), 647,
656
- Socotra, 516
- soldiers, 218
- Somali coast, 516, 520
- Somalia, 495
- Somaliland, 510
- Son of Heaven (*T'ien-tzu* 天子), 51, 680
- south China
harvests, floods and droughts, 340
population of, 329, 330, 391
- South China Sea, 445
- South Indian merchants, 515
- South Seas (Nan-hai 南海), 180, 442,
449, 452, 479, 512, 520
- Southeast Asia, 438, 442, 444, 445,
446, 447, 464, 467, 493, 494,
495, 496, 504, 505, 507, 509,
510, 514, 515, 518, 520, 522
commodities from, 453
products, 439
- Southeast Asian textiles, 507
- Southeast China, 507
- Southeast macroregion, 327, 329, 333,
334, 765
- southern barbarian merchants (*chao-lai
Man-shang* 招來蠻商), 464
- Southern Family (*Nan-chia* 南家) and
Southern Family registry
(*Nan-chia chi-bao* 南家記號),
483
- Southern Han 南漢 kingdom (917–71),
223, 440, 463, 464, 505
- Southern Outer Office of Clan Affairs
(*Nan-wai tsung-cheng ssu* 南外宗
政司), 482, 524
- Southern T'ang 南唐 dynasty or
kingdom (937–75), 220, 290,
455, 456, 464
- Southwest Asia, 516
- specifications. *See* *shih*
- spices, 460
- sponsored endorsements. *See* *chien-chü* 薦
舉
- Spring and Autumn annals* (*Ch'un-ch'iu* 春
秋), 299, 300, 313, 704, 711,
719, 736

- Spring and autumn of the Ten Kingdoms. See*
Shih-kuo ch'un-ch'iu 十國春秋
 spurious learning (*wei-hsüeh* 偽學), 311,
 721
 and the examinations, 738
 Sri Lanka, 447, 494, 500, 504
 Srīvijaya (San-fo-ch'i 三佛齊), 444,
 502, 503, 507, 512, 513, 514,
 515, 516, 518, 520
 merchants, 503
ssu 司 (bureau, office, subsection of the
 Six Ministries), 68, 154
ssu 私 (partiality, private-mindedness),
 37
Ssu-chi. See Palace Domestic Service:
 Records Office
Ssu-chou 泗州 in Huai-nan-tung, 202
ssu-fa ts'an-chün 司法參軍. *See* judicial
 inspectors
ssu-li ts'an-chün 司理參軍, *See* police
 inspectors in prefectures. *See*
 police inspector
Ssu-ma Ch'ien 司馬遷 (145 or 135–
 c. 86 BC), 37
Ssu-ma Kuang 司馬光 (1019–86), 11,
 12, 32, 35, 36, 38, 39, 48, 79,
 90, 104, 121, 127, 129, 130,
 132, 150, 155, 337, 338, 340,
 536, 562, 574, 589, 669, 682,
 690, 695, 699, 701, 708, 712,
 724, 725, 728, 733, 739, 756,
 788
 debate with Ou-yang Hsiu on
 examinations, 295
 thought of, 682, 689
Ssu-nung ssu 司農寺. *See* Court of
 Agricultural Supervision
Ssu-wen 私文. *See* This Culture of Ours
Ssu-yen 司言. *See* Shang-shu nei-sheng:
 Communications Office
 staff supervisor. *See* p'an-kuan 判官
 standard. *See* ching 經
 state, changes in, 536
 state body. *See* kuo-t'i
 State Council. *See also* Hall of
 Administration (*Cheng-*
 shih-t'ang 政事堂), 35, 39, 40,
 62, 74, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 98,
 99, 100, 109, 116, 120, 124,
 129, 132
 State Finance Commission. *See* Finance
 Commission
 State Finance Commission (*San-ssu* 三司
 “three offices”), 153, 481
 State History Office (*Shih-kuan* 史館),
 45
 state monopoly agents. *See* chien-tang
 kuan 監當官
 State Trade Policy (*Shih-i fa* 市易法),
 151, 165, 178, 179
 statecraft learning, 669
 statutes. *See* lü
Statutes and precedents of the sacred
 administration of the great Yuan
 dynastic state. See Yüan tien chang
Statutes of the Ministry of Personnel. See
 Li-pu t'iao-fa 吏部條法
 steel (*pin-t'ieh* 鑛鐵), 444
 Stele for Pacifying Huai-hsi (*P'ing*
 Huai-hsi pei 平淮西碑), 448
 stipendiary office. *See* chi-lu-k'uan 寄祿
 官, chieh-kuan 階官
 stockade (*chai* 寨), 218
 Stone Drum Academy (*Shih-ku sbu-yüan*
 石鼓書院), 309
 stone inscriptions (*shih-k'uo* 石刻), 444
 stone stele (*shen-tao pei* 神道碑), 448
 storax, liquid, 509
 street encroachment tax (*ch'in-chieh ch'ien*
 侵街錢), 23
 street peddlers, 529
 string of cash (*min* 緡, *kuan* 貫). *See*
 money: strings of cash
 Su Ch'e 蘇轍 (1039–1112), 11, 66, 77,
 547, 669, 740, 762
 Su Hsien 蘇峴 (1118–83), 481
 Su Hsün 蘇洵 (1009–66), 11, 35, 36,
 696

- Su Shih 蘇軾 (1037-1101), 11, 64, 67, 78, 80, 105, 106, 134, 264, 299, 358, 377, 522, 527, 562, 584, 653, 667, 669, 670, 694, 697, 708, 710, 711, 712, 720, 721, 729, 740, 762, 789
- Su learning, 669, 712
- Su-chou 宿州 (modern Su-hsien 宿縣 in Anhwei), 246
- Su-chou 蘇州 (P'ing-chiang fu 平江府) in Liang-che-hsi, 341, 343, 345, 365, 366, 368, 369, 371, 387, 388, 393, 395, 398, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 433
- rice production, 393
- Su-li so 訴理所. *See* Office of Accusation Adjudication
- su-mu 蘇木. *See* sappan wood
- subdistrict (*hsiang* 鄉, *li* 里), 282
- suburban sacrifices (*nan-chiao* 南郊), 56, 62, 287
- Sui 隋 dynasty (581-618)
- maritime trade, 487
- sui-kung* 歲貢. *See* annual tribute
- sui-pi* 歲幣 (annual gift), 147
- sui-si* 歲賜 (annual grant), 182
- sulphur, 519
- Sulu Sea, 445
- Sumatra, 442, 447, 494, 495, 503, 510, 515, 518, 520
- summer tax (*hsia-shui* 夏稅, also called tax cash, *shui-ch'ien* 稅錢 or tax silk, *shui-chüan* 稅絹), 158, 162
- Sun Ch'üan 孫權 (r. 222-52), 446
- Sun Fu 孫復 (992-1057), 677
- Sun Meng-kuan 孫夢觀 (1200-57), 481
- Sun Min-hsiu 孫敏修, 133
- Sun Sheng 孫升 (1038-99), 110, 176
- Sun Ssu-miao 孫思邈, 571
- Sung agricultural revolution, 344
- Sung dynasty
- periodization of, 27, 325
- significance of, 16-18, 19
- traditional views of, 1-2
- Sung economy
- periodization of, 325
- Sung government
- changing nature of, 27
- Sung hsing-t'ung* 宋刑統. *See* *Sung penal conspectus*
- Sung hui-yao chi-kao* 宋會要輯稿, 5, 24, 43, 102, 116, 281, 479, 514, 516. *See also* *Collected Sung documents*, *Draft compendium of Sung documents*
- Sung penal conspectus* (*Sung hsing-t'ung* 宋刑統), 7, 252, 254, 257, 270, 275, 281. *See also* *Chung hsiang ting hsing-t'ung* 重詳定刑統 (*Re-examined and redetermined collected penal laws*)
- Sung periodization, 4
- Sung Tz'u 宋慈 (1186-1249), 260, 554
- Sung-shih* 宋史 (*Sung history* or *Official History of the Sung*), 26, 103, 128, 137, 465, 487, 490, 514, 730, 786
- sung-shih* 訟士). *See* law: litigation teachers or masters
- sung-shu* 松樹. *See* pine
- Sung-yang Academy (*Sung-hsiang shu-yuan* 嵩陽書院, *Sung-shan shu-yuan* 嵩山書院), 295
- suo-t'ing shih* 鎖廳試. *See* locked hall examination
- supervising secretary. *See* *chi-shih-chung*
- supplementary service tax (*chu-i ch'ien* 助役錢), 170
- supply commissioners (*fa-yün shih* 發運使), 145, 202
- supreme area commander (*tu-tsung-kuan* 都總管), 225
- Supreme mystery (*T'ai-hsüan* 太玄), 693
- Supreme principles governing the world* (*Huang chi ching shih shu* 皇極經世書), 701
- surveillance agencies. *See* *chien-ssu* 監司

Surviving works of the two Ch'engs. See

Erb-Ch'eng i-shu 二程遺書

Sūtra to increase the life account (I-suan ching 益算經), 531

Szechwan 四川, 6, 156, 157, 161, 163, 167, 169, 193, 201, 207, 210, 221, 235, 236, 239, 242, 243, 245, 248, 314, 317, 318, 327, 334, 343, 345, 346, 354, 364, 368, 378, 380, 384, 389, 392, 403, 411, 413, 429, 430, 431, 432, 486, 527, 533, 534, 544, 545, 547, 551, 611, 622, 626, 669

Ta Ch'in 大秦. *See* Roman Empire

Ta Chou hsing-t'ung 大周刑統. *See* *Penal conspectus of the Great Chou*

ta chün ts'ang/k'u 大軍倉/庫. *See* grand military granaries/storehouses

ta shih-ch'ien 大使臣 (servitors major), 50, 51

ta t'i 大體 (larger structure), 687

Ta-hsüeh yen-i 大學衍義 (Extended meaning of the Great learning), 786

Ta-hui Tsung-kao 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163), 598, 734, 739

ta-i 大意 (general meaning of the classics), 294

Ta-li ssu 大理寺. *See* Court of Judicial Review

Ta-Liang hsin ting ko shih lü ling 大梁新定格式令. *See* Newly determined regulations, specifications, statutes, and ordinances of the Great Liang

Ta-lien Bay 大連灣, 445

ta-nei 大內. *See* imperial city

ta-ni 大逆 (great subversion), 271

Ta-san Pass 大散關, 155

ta-she 大赦. *See* great acts of grace

Ta-shih 大食. *See* Arabs

Tackett, Nicholas, 623

Tai, Earl, 591

Tai Fu-ku 戴復古 (b. 1167), 528

Tai yü ch'i-chieh 帶御器械 (Bearer of the Imperial Arms), 114

tai-jen 代人 (in another's stead), 582

tai-mao 玳瑁. *See* tortoise shells

tai-tsui 待罪 (awaiting punishment), 106

t'ai 大 (major or rising), 702

T'ai-chi t'u shuo 太極圖說. *See*

Explanation of the diagram of the supreme ultimate

T'ai-chou 台州 in Liang-che-tung, 396, 401, 402, 404, 413, 423, 433, 501

T'ai-fu ssu 太府寺. *See* Court of the Imperial Treasury

T'ai-hang Mountains 太行山 in Ho-pei hsi, 357

T'ai-ho county 太和縣 in Chi-chou, Chiang-nan-hsi, 363, 390, 395

T'ai-hsüeh 太學. *See* Imperial University

T'ai-p'ing era extended record (T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi 太平廣記), 671

T'ai-p'ing era imperial reader (T'ai-p'ing yü-lan 太平御覽), 521, 671

T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi 太平廣記. *See* *T'ai-p'ing era extended record*

T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi 太平廣記 (Broad records from the *T'ai-p'ing era* or *T'ai-p'ing era extended record*), 533

T'ai-p'ing prefecture 太平州 in Chiang-nan-tung, 365

T'ai-shang 太上 (Lao-tzu 老子), 617

T'ai-tsu 太祖 (Chao K'uang-yin 趙匡胤, 927–76, r. 960–76), 3, 7, 8, 27, 29, 30, 44, 45, 55, 78, 85, 90, 99, 142, 143, 146, 147, 166, 181, 187, 192, 194, 200, 201, 203, 219, 220, 221, 231, 253, 254, 262, 290, 455, 464, 465, 653, 657

dynastic policies of, 30

organization of the military, 214

- T'ai-tsung 太宗 (Chao K'uang-i 趙匡義, 939-97, r. 977-97), 3, 9, 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 51, 55, 78, 82, 85, 90, 94, 96, 146, 147, 172, 181, 182, 194, 209, 215, 216, 218, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 229, 231, 286, 290, 291, 456, 465, 474, 479, 605, 671, 768
 recruitment of literati, 670
T'ai-yüan 臺院. *See* Censorate:
 Headquarters Bureau
T'ai-yüan prefecture 太原府 in
 Ho-tung, 221, 233
 talent (*ts'ai* 才), 293
tan 石 (dry measure for grain, approx. three bushels), 201, 236
 Tan, Tuan Yuan, 660
 Tan-kan Island 担杆島, 462
tan-p'o 啖婆 (alternative name for cotton in Chinese), 508
 T'an Tzu-hsiao 譚子宵, 605
 T'an-chou 潭州 (modern Ch'ang-sha) in
 Ching-hu-nan, 164, 369, 379, 390, 393
tang 黨. *See* political faction, fellowship
 T'ang 唐 dynasty (618-907), ix, xv, 1, 2, 20, 28, 29, 30, 43, 46, 62, 86, 99, 104, 113, 114, 128, 129, 140, 142, 145, 271, 362, 440, 501, 513, 523, 531, 543, 591, 593, 608, 610, 636, 638, 665, 678, 680, 681, 694, 729, 744, 767, 770
 administration of maritime trade, 460
 civil service, 54
 court procedures, 44
 economic and fiscal order, 321
 examination system, 34
 government mining receipts, 192
 late T'ang economic changes, 3, 16
 late T'ang foreign relations, 439
 maritime relations, 440
 maritime trade, 180, 330, 405, 429, 433, 436, 437, 470
 merchant practices, 181
 military training, 200
 official market system, 322
 origins of printing, 13
 poetry, 569
 population in the south, 659
 rulers, 768, 771
 scholars, 764, 767
 sources, 533
 taxation, 175
 writers' friendship circles, 636
 T'ang Chung-yu 唐仲友 (1136-88), 759, 760, 764, 789
 T'ang code (T'ang-lü 唐律), 7
T'ang code and commentary (T'ang-lü shu-i 唐律疏議), 250, 251, 252, 254, 255, 257, 275, 277, 284, 382
 T'ang Hsüan-tsung 唐玄宗 (685-762, r. 712-56), 148, 522, 670
T'ang hui-yao 唐會要 (*Compendium of T'ang documents*), 43
 T'ang Kao-tsung 唐高宗 (628-83, r. 649-83), 148
 T'ang Te-tsung 唐德宗 (742-805, r. 780-805), 448
 T'ang Wen-tsung 唐文宗 (808-40, r. 826-40), 461
t'ang-ch'u 堂除 (*hall appointments*), 68
T'ang-lü. *See* T'ang code
 T'ang-Sung transition or transformation 17, 325, 593, 626, 650
T'ang-yin pi-shih 堂陰比事. *See* *Parallel cases under the pear tree*
 Tangut 黨項, 28, 29, 31, 32, 118, 222, 224
 Tangut wars, 29, 31, 32, 118
tao 道, 714, 720, 728, 770, 771, 776, 780
tao 道 of antiquity, 684

- Tao-hsiieh* 道學 (*Learning of the Way*), 8,
10, 12, 25, 128, 309, 313, 320,
536, 540, 541, 542, 552, 567,
578, 580, 583, 587, 588, 589,
595, 621, 628, 629, 633, 634,
635, 648, 658, 660, 662, 667,
668, 681, 720, 721, 722, 724,
726, 727, 731
attacks and blacklisting, 761. *See also*
(spurious learning)
elevation of in late Southern Sung
787
establishment as orthodox in the
Yüan, 660
as a faction, 637
familism, 575
movement, 722
origins of the name, 728
relation to the examinations, 312
and religion, 618
Tao-hsiieh fellowship, 729, 731, 737,
741, 750, 782, 788
definition of, 731
Tao-hsiieh historians, 132
Tao-hsiieh scholars, 750
Tao ming lu 道命錄, 731, 788
tao-shih 道師. *See* Taoism: priests
Tao-t'ung 道統 (continuity of the Way,
transmission of the Way), 636,
722, 755, 756, 779, 781, 783
Taoism, 604, 720
alleged decline of, 620
Celestial Heart school (T'ien-hsin
cheng-fa 天心正法), 605, 606,
607, 608, 609, 650
certification of priests, 531
Cheng-i 正一 school, 608
Ch'ing-wei 清微 rites, 607
Confucian critiques of, 740
Divine Empyrean (*Shen-hsiao* 神霄),
606
divinities, 600
enthusiasm for, 739
exorcists, 608
hostility to, 739
Huang-Lao 黃老 thought, 670
under Hui-tsung, 538
Mao-shan 茅山 school, 609
nuns, 585
origins of gods, 611
priests (*tao-shih* 道師), 601, 607,
609, 621, 778
and religious market, 600
ritual masters, 601
rituals for the dead, 603
slanders by Taoists, 768
in Southern Sung, 538
Taoist canons, 94
Taoist scriptures, 553
Taoist values, 32
temples, 203, 619
tradition, 680
Taoist sects
Five Thunders (*Wu-lei* 五雷) school,
606, 607, 608, 609, 650
Taoist temples
as hostels in the capital, 315
Tax Bureau (*Tu-chih ssu* 度支司), 145
tax on overseas vessels (*hai-ch'uan shui* 海
船稅), 467
taxes
biannual tax (*liang-shui fa* 兩稅法),
156, 158, 175, 176, 184, 348.
See twice-a-year tax
brokers and deeds tax (*ya ch'i*
shui-ch'ien 牙契稅錢), 196
commercial tax (*shang-shui* 商稅), 3,
5, 6, 18, 22-4, 145, 149, 172,
176, 182-207, 323, 379, 436
reduction in early Southern Sung,
389
commutation abuses, 161
guild exemption tax (*mien-hang ch'ien*
免行錢), 178, 179
head tax (*shen-ting chien/mi* 身丁
錢/米, *k'ou-fu* 口賦), 158
house tax (*wu-shui* 屋稅), 175
maritime trade taxes, 467

taxes (*cont.*)

- obligatory sale of goods (*ch'ai-k'o* 差科, *k'o-shuai* 科率, *p'ei-mai* 配賣), 176
- sales tax (*chu-shui* 住稅), 22, 177
- supplementary and miscellaneous taxes, 159
- surcharge or surtax (*t'ou-tzu ch'ien* 頭子錢, *ch'i-fen tseng-shui ch'ien* 七分曾稅錢), 162, 178, 197
- tax on business done by shops (*ying-yün ch'ien* 營運錢), 176
- tax on urban rent (*chia-yeh ch'ien* 家業錢), 176
- transit tax (*kuo-shui* 過稅), 177, 380
- urban, 175
- Te-ch'ing fu 德慶府 (K'ang-chou 康州) in Kuang-nan-tung, 647
- te-hsing* 德行. *See* good behavior
- te-hsing chih chih* 德性之知. *See* moral knowledge
- Te-hua county 德化縣 in Ch'üan-chou, Fu-chien, 369, 428, 494, 495, 497, 498
- Te-shun-chün 德順軍 (modern Ching-ning 靜寧 in Kiangsu), 245
- t'e-tsou-ming* 特奏名. *See* facilitated degrees
- tea (*ch'a* 茶), 182, 189, 510
- la-ch'a* 臘茶 (waxed tea), 510
- lung-feng-ch'a* 龍鳳茶 (dragon-phoenix tea), 510
- tea supervisorate (*t'i-chü ch'a-shih ssu* 提舉茶事司), 477
- teaching officials (*chiaio-kuan* 教官), 300
- Teiser, Steven, 616
- Temmoku 天目 ware, 497, 498
- Temple of Heavenly Felicity (T'ien-ch'ing Kuan 天慶觀), 604
- Ten Kings of purgatory, 616
- Ten-thousand word memorial (*Wan-yen shu* 萬言書), 683
- tenant guests (*tien-k'o* 佃客), 349
- tenants (*tien-hu* 佃戶), 165, 173, 174, 194, 321, 349, 535
- teng* 等 (ranks), 168
- Teng Chieh 鄧杰, 644
- Teng Kuang-ming 鄧廣銘 (1907-98), 755
- Teng Ssu-hsien 鄧思賢, 560
- Teng Su 鄧肅 (1091-1132), 45
- Teng-chou 鄧州 in Ching-tung-tung, 244, 389, 445, 478
- Teng-wen chien-yüan* 登聞檢院. *See* Public Petitioners Review Office
- Teng-wen ku-yüan* 登聞鼓院. *See* Public Petitioners Drum Office
- T'eng-hsien 藤縣 (Sung T'eng-chou 藤州) in Kwang-nan-hsi, 500
- t'eng-lu* 謄錄 (copying of examination papers by clerks), 292
- ter Haar, Barend, 611
- Terms explained*. *See* *Pei-hsi tzu-i* 北溪字義
- Ternate, 445
- terraced fields (*t'i-t'ien* 梯田), 361
- textiles, 370
- cotton, 503
- hemp and ramie, 370
- silk, 506
- silk (*chuan* 絹), 182
- silk cloth, 368, 460
- silk production, 370, 425
- silk trade, 506
- Thailand, 494, 500, 502
- This Culture of Ours (*Ssu-wen* 私文), 672
- three bars to separation. *See* *san pu ch'u* 三不出
- Three Capital Guards. *See* army: Three Capital Guards
- Three Departments (San-sheng 三省), 37
- Three Dynasties (San-tai 三代), 675, 767, 768, 770, 771

- Three Hall System (*San-she-fa* 三舍法), 12, 300, 304, 710
- Three Kingdoms (220–80), 21
- ti* 糴 (grain purchase), 198
- ti-k'o* 地客. *See* land guests
- ti-li chiao-ch'ien* 地里腳錢. *See* transport fee
- ti-t'ou-yin* 地頭引. *See* certificates for maritime traders: for permission to trade at locations in China
- t'i* 體 (normative structure, essence or substance of all things), 691, 728
- t'i-chü ch'a-shih ssu* 提舉茶事司. *See* tea supervisorate
- t'i-chü hsüeh-shih* 提舉學使. *See* education: education intendants
- t'i-t'ien* 梯田. *See* terraced fields
- t'i-tien hsing-yü* 提點形獄. *See* judicial commissioner
- t'i-tien hsing-yü kung-shih*. *See* judicial circuit commissioner
- T'i-yao lun* 體要論 (*Discourse on the essentials of the body*), 36
- tiao-bo* 調和 (harmony), 39
- Tiao-yü-ch'eng 釣魚城, 248
- Tibet, 516
- Tibetan kingdom (7th–9th century), 439
- Tibetans, 79, 178, 190, 448
- Tidore, 445
- tieh-shih* 牒試. *See* avoidance examination
- t'ieh* 帖. *See* memory passages
- tien 店. *See* markets: shop/hostel
- Tien-ch'ien tu chih-hui shih ssu* 殿前都指揮使司. *See* Palace Bureau of the Commander-in-chief
- Tien-ch'ien tu tien-chien ssu* 殿前都點檢司. *See* Palace Inspectorate-general
- tien-chu ya-jen* 店主牙人. *See* inn keeper/market broker
- Tien-chung shih yü-shih* 殿中侍御史. *See* Censorate: Palace Censors
- tien-hu* 佃戶. *See* tenants
- tien-k'o* 佃客. *See* tenant guests
- Tien-mu Mountain 天目山, 498
- tien-p'u* 佃僕. *See* servants or bondservants
- tien-shih* 殿試. *See* palace examination
- Tien-ssu* 殿司. *See* army: Palace Command
- Tien-yüan* 殿院. *See* Censorate: Palace Bureau
- t'ien* 天. *See* Heaven
- T'ien Hsi 田錫 (940–1003), 673
- t'ien-chih ch'ien* 添支錢. *See* salaries of officials: supplements to salary (t'ien-chih ch'ien 添支錢)
- T'ien-ch'ing Kuan* 天慶觀. *See* Temple of Heavenly Felicity
- t'ien-hsia* 天下 (the empire), 709
- t'ien-li* 天理 (heavenly principle), 718, 719
- T'ien-p'eng 天蓬, 605
- T'ien-tzu* 天子. *See* Son of Heaven; Imperial titles
- T'ien-wu Army 天武軍, 216
- Tillman, Hoyt, 10, 12, 309, 634
- Timor, 445
- Ting ware (*Ting-tz'u* 定瓷), 373, 375, 494
- Ting-chia-chou 丁家洲, battle of, 249
- Ting-chou 定州 (Chung-shan fu 中山府) in Ho-pei-hsi, 368, 377, 383. *See also* ceramics
- Ting-chou wares, 428
- Ting-ch'uan-chai 定川砦, battle of, 224
- Ting-hai county 定海縣 in Ming-chou, Liang-che-tung, 457, 475
- ting-hsiang* 丁香. *See* cloves
- T'ing-chou 汀州 in Fu-chien, 382, 415
- t'ing-hu* 亭戶. *See* private salt producers
- Tioman Island (Malaysia), 495

- titular office. *See* *chieb-kuan* 階官,
chi-lu-k'uan 寄祿官
- tombstone inscriptions (*mu-pei* 墓碑),
 444
- Tomo Mizukoshi 水越知, 612
- Tongkin, 523
- tortoise shells (*tai-mao* 玳瑁), 444, 453,
 516, 518, 520
- tou* 斗 (Chinese peck, 1/10 tan), 236
- tou-niu* 鬪紐, 404
- tou-sung* 鬪訟. *See* conflicts and suits
- t'ou-ming ya-ch'ien* 投名衙前. *See*
 volunteer office servicemen
- t'ou-tzu ch'ien* 頭子錢 (surcharge cash).
See taxes: surcharge or surtax
- Tract of T'ai-shang on action and
 response, 616
- transferred in residence. *See* *i-hsiang* 移
 鄉
- transform society through instruction
 (*chiao-hua* 教化), 675
- transmission of the Way. *See* *Tao-t'ung* 道
 統
- transport fee (*chih-i* 支移, *chih-i*
chiao-ch'ien 支移腳錢, *ti-li*
chiao-ch'ien 地里腳錢), 160
- transport system, 200
- traveling merchants (*k'o-shang* 客商),
 177, 178, 406
- treasuries, 192
- Treatises on humaneness. See* *Jen shuo* 仁說
- trial and imprisonment (*tuan-yü* 斷獄)
 in *Sung hsing-t'ung*, 255
- tribute. *See* government revenues: tribute
- tribute system, 507
- tribute trade (*ch'ao-kung mao-i* 朝貢貿
 易), 437, 440
- troop commanders (*pu-chiang* 部將),
 214
- Tsa-hsiieh pien* 雜學編. *See* *Critique of*
adulterated learning
- tsa-lü* 雜律. *See* miscellaneous statutes
- tsa-se-t'ao* 雜色陶. *See* ceramics: dark
 colored earthenware
- tsa-yao* 雜徭. *See* labor service: rotational
 labor service
- tsai-hsiang* 宰相. *See* chief councilors
- ts'ai* 才. *See* talent
- Ts'ai Ching 蔡京 (1047–1126), 8, 9,
 78, 120, 124, 128, 130, 131,
 133, 134, 135, 166, 301, 304,
 309, 477, 554
- Ts'ai Ch'üeh 蔡確 (1037–93), 39
- Ts'ai Hsiang 蔡襄 (1012–67), 105,
 667
- Ts'ai Pien 蔡卞 (1058–1117), 131
- Ts'ai T'ao 蔡條 (b. 1097), 116
- Ts'ai Yu 蔡攸 (1077–1126), 232
- ts'ai-cheng kuo-chia*. *See* fiscal state
- Ts'ai-chien chü* 裁減局. *See* Office of
 Expenditure Reduction
- Ts'ai-chou 蔡州 Ching-hsi-pei, 355
- Ts'ai-shih 采石, 220, 238
- Ts'an-chih cheng-shih* 參知政事
 (Participant in Determining
 Governmental Affairs, assistant
 chief councilor, 99, 163
- ts'an-ling* 殘零 (residual positions), 70
- Ts'an-yen fa* 蠶鹽法. *See* salt policies:
 Silkworm Salt Policy
- ts'ang* 倉. *See* granaries
- Ts'ang fa* 倉法. *See* New Policies:
 Granaries Policy or Law
- Ts'ang-chou 滄州 in Ho-pei-tung, 217
- Ts'ang-pu* 倉部. *See* Ministry of Revenue:
 Granaries Bureau
- tsao-hu* 灶戶. *See* private salt producers
- Ts'ao Shao, 642
- ts'ao-ch'en chien ling* 漕臣兼領, 480. *See*
 financial experts
- Ts'ao-liao ch'ang 草料場. *See* Fodder
 Yard
- ts'ao-ssu* 漕司. *See* fiscal commissioner
- ts'e* 策. *See* policy discussion questions
- tsei-tao* 賊盜. *See* violence and theft
- Ts'en-shui 岑水 in Shao-chou,
 Kuang-nan-tung, 408
- Tseng Chi-li 曾季狸, 648

- Tseng Feng 曾丰 (b. 1142), 534, 646, 647, 648
- Tseng Kung 曾鞏 (1019–83), 648
- Tseng Pu 曾布 (1035–1107), 46, 66, 91, 115, 118, 120, 124, 134, 153
- Tseng-tzu 曾子 (505–c.436 BC), 779, 784
- Tso Chuan* 左傳 (*Chronicles of Tso*), 81
- tso sheng-chih* 作聖旨 (composed the imperial will), 124
- Tso yü chün-hsiün yüan* 左右軍巡院. *See* Left and Right Courts of the Military Inspector
- Tso/yu ch'eng-hsiang* 左/右丞相. *See* Left or Right Councilor-in-Chief
- tso-fang* 作坊. *See* workshops for weapons and body armor
- tso-hsüan* 左選 (left selection in the Ministry of Personnel), 50
- Tso-i Squadron 左翼軍, 457
- Tso-i tzu-chen* 作邑自箴. *See* Self-admonitions for local administrators
- Tso-ts'ang k'u* 左藏庫. *See* Finance Commission or State Finance Commission: Left Storehouse
- Tso-ts'ao* 左曹 (Left Section in the Ministry of Revenue), 154
- Tso-ts'ao shih-lang* 左曹侍郎. *See* Ministry of Revenue: Left Vice Minister of Revenue
- tsou-chuang* 奏狀. *See* document processing: submitted petition
- tsou-i* 奏議. *See* memorial
- tsou-ma ch'eng-shou* 走馬承受. *See* mounted couriers
- tsou-ping* 奏稟. *See* document processing: retained memorial
- tsu* 足, *tsu-mo* 足陌. *See* money: full strings of cash
- tsu-tsung* 祖宗. *See* imperial predecessors
- tsu-tsung chih fa* 祖宗之法 (the policies of the ancestors), 30
- ts'u-se* 粗色. *See* coarse goods
- tsung* 宗 (ancestor), 82
- Tsung Tse 宗澤 (1060–1128), 239, 241
- Tsung-chih ssu* 聰制司. *See* Office for the Supervision of State Finances
- tsung-ling* 總領. *See* overseer generals
- tsung-ling shih* 總領使. *See* general commissioners of supply
- tsung-shih* 宗室. *See* imperial clan
- ts'ung... yü* 從...游 (roaming after), 633
- ts'ung-chih ch'ien* 聰制錢. *See* finance supervision cash
- tu* 都 (troop), 216
- Tu chin-tsou yüan 都進奏院. *See* document processing: Capital Memorials Office
- Tu Fan 杜範 (1182–1245), 432
- Tu Fu 杜甫, 552
- Tu Huan 杜環, 448
- Tu Kao 杜杲 (1173–1248), 248
- tu-chih lang-chung* 度支郎中 (Director of the Bureau of General Accounts), 75
- Tu-chih ssu* 度支司. *See* Ministry of Revenue: Tax Bureau, Bureau of General Accounts
- tu-hsiang* 獨相. *See* chief councilors: sole councilor
- tu-pu-shu* 都部署. *See* chief administration officer
- tu-tieh* 度牒. *See* monk certificates, *also* ordination certificates
- tu-tso yüan* 都作院. *See* chief manufacturies
- Tu-tsung 度宗 (Chao Ch'i 趙禔, 1240–74, r. 1264–74), 90, 91
- tu-tsung-kuan* 都總管. *See* supreme area commander
- tu-t'ung-chih* 都統制 (imperial defense command supreme commandants), 238

- t'u-huo ch'iang* 突火槍 (fire-emitting spear, prototypes of guns), 238, 458
- t'u-ping* 土兵. *See* army: local troops
- t'u-ti shen* 土地神. *See* religion: place god
- Tuan Ch'eng-shih 段成式 (803-63), 443, 448
- Tuan Wen-ch'ang 段文昌 (733-835), 448
- Tuan-chou 端州 (Chao-ch'ing fu 肇慶府) in Kuang-nan-tung, 368
- tuai-yü* 斷獄. *See* trial and imprisonment
- Tufan, 519
- tui* 隊. *See* army: companies
- t'ui-kuan* 推官. *See* prefectural judges
- t'un* 屯. *See* garrisons
- t'un-t'ien* 屯田. *See* agriculture: state farmlands
- Tung Chü-i, 647
- Tung K'ai 董楷 (b. 1226), 476
- tung oil, 453
- Tung Wei 董煨 (d. 1217), 212, 410
- Tung-ching meng-hua lu* 東京夢華錄 (*The eastern capital: A dream of splendors past*), 583
- Tung-ching Regency (*Tung-ching liu-shou* 東京留守), 241
- Tung-ching Regency Army (*Tung-ching liu-shou-ssu chün* 東京留守司軍). *See* Shen-wu Rear Army (Shen-wu hou *chün* 神武後軍) and Yüeh Army (Yüeh-chia *chün* 岳家軍), 239
- tung-hang lu* 東行路. *See* eastern route
- tung-kung* 東宮. *See* palace of the heir apparent
- Tung-nan liu-lu chün-shu fa* 東南六路均輸法. *See* Adjustment Tribute Policy
- Tung-t'ing Lake 洞庭湖, 346
- Tung-t'ing-shan 洞庭山 in Wu county, Su-chou, 368, 398
- t'ung* 銅. *See* copper
- T'ung chung-shu men-bsia p'ing-ch'ang shih* 同中書門下平章事 (Joint manager of Affairs with the Secretariat-Chancellery), 99
- T'ung Kuan 童貫 (1054-1126), 231, 232
- T'ung-an county 同安縣, Ch'üan-chou in Fu-chien, 495
- T'ung-an-ch'eng 統安城, battle of, 232
- t'ung-ch'ien* 銅錢. *See* copper coins
- T'ung-chih* 通志. *See* Comprehensive treatise
- t'ung-chin* 銅禁 (copper prohibitions), 207
- T'ung-chin ssu* 通進司. *See* document processing: Memorial Presentation Office
- t'ung ch'u-shen* 同出身 (passed the palace examination), 316
- T'ung-ch'üan-fu circuit 潼川府路, 386
- t'ung-feng* 通封 (unsealed memorial), 122
- t'ung-hsiu shih-kuan hsiu-chuan* 同修史館修撰 (concurrent director of the History Office), 45
- T'ung-hui-chen 通惠鎮 (Ch'ing-lung-chen 青龍鎮) in Hua-ting county, Hsiu-chou, Liang-che, 478
- T'ung-kuan 銅官, 442, 494
- t'ung-ling* 統領. *See* vice commander-general
- t'ung-p'an* 通判 (controller-general, vice prefect, prefectural supervisor), 51, 147, 470
- t'ung-shang fa* 通商法. *See* salt distribution by private merchants for south China
- Tungtuk (in Ko Kno Khao, Phangan, South Thailand), 442
- Turfan, 440
- tussahs (bombycine), 508
- Twitchett, Denis, xv, 240

Tzu shuo 子說. *See* *Explanations of characters*
tzu te 自得 (apprehend for oneself), 714
 Tzu-chou circuit 梓州路, 346
tzu-hsü 資序 (functional rank), 59
 Tzu-kung 子貢 (520–c.446 BC), 779
tzu-pen 資本. *See* capital
 Tzu-ssu 子思 (481–402 BC), 784
 Tzu-t'ung, Szechwanese god, 612
 Tz'u-chou 磁州 in Ho-peï-hsi, 372, 375, 377, 495, 498
 Tz'u-shan 祠山 god, 614
 Tz'u-tsao 磁灶 kiln, 498
 Tz'u-t'ung city 刺桐城, name for Ch'üan-chou, 453
 Uighurs 回紇, 440
 Ultimate of Non-being (*Wu-chi* 無極), 756
 debate over, 777
 Umehara Kaoru 梅原郁, 101
 unauthorized corvée levies (*shan-hsing* 擅興) in *Sung hsing-t'ung*, 255
Understanding of words (*Chih-yen* 知言), 737
 unicorn gutta (*ch'i-lin-chieb* 麒麟竭), 514
 Upper Yangtze River Valley
 macroregion, 328, 334, 350, 421, 431
 van der Loon, Piet, 606, 607
 various [fields] degrees. *See* *chu-k'o* 諸科
 vice commander-general (*t'ung-ling* 統領), 230
 Vice Director in the Ministry of Rites.
 See *Li-pu yüan-wai-lang*
 vice magistrate (*hsien-ch'eng* 縣丞), 147
 Vice Military Affairs Commissioner
 (*Shu-mi fu-shih* 樞密副使), 41
 vice prefect. *See* *t'ung-p'an* 通判 or
 chien-chou 監州

Vietnam (*Yüeh-nan* 越南), 223, 442
 Sung relations with, 223
 Sung war with, 229, 230
 Vietnamese customary law, 280
 Vietnamese potters, 496
 village or community granaries
 (*she-ts'ang* 社倉). *See* granaries
 (*ts'ang* 倉): village or community
 granaries
 violence and theft (*tsei-tao* 賊盜) in *Sung
 hsing-t'ung*, 255
 volunteer office servicemen (*ch'ang-ming
 ya-ch'ien* 長名衙前, *t'ou-ming
 ya-ch'ien* 投名衙前), 169
 von Glahn, Richard, 531, 540, 640
 Walton, Linda A., 312, 619, 640
 Wan-chieh Army 萬捷軍, 217
 Wan-yen Liang 完顏亮 (Hai-ling-wang
 海陵王, 1122–61, r. 1149–61),
 245
 Wang An-shih 王安石 (1021–86), 4, 8,
 11, 12, 23, 25, 32, 35, 36, 41,
 45, 46, 48, 64, 76, 78, 80, 110,
 128, 130, 133, 134, 150, 155,
 165, 166, 173, 174, 191, 196,
 199, 205, 208, 226, 228, 229,
 304, 337, 340, 342, 358, 367,
 379, 469, 477, 530, 536, 537,
 540, 541, 634, 656, 658, 662,
 664, 667, 669, 681, 682, 689,
 690, 694, 695, 698, 699, 706,
 707, 708, 709, 712, 713, 716,
 721, 723, 725, 728, 729, 776,
 789
 examination reforms, 298
 priorities of, 153
 reforms of, 55, 97, 146, 150, 168,
 170
 support for local gods, 612
 thought of, 682
 Wang learning, 669
 Wang Chen 王禎 (1271–1333), 363
 Wang Chieh, 605

- Wang Chien 王堅 (d. 1264), 248
 Wang Ch'ung 王瓊, 483
 Wang Ch'ou 王疇 (d. 1065), 107
 Wang Fu 王黼 (1079-1126), 131, 137, 232
 Wang Hsi 王曦 (*tzu* Wang Yen-hsi 王延羲, 486
 Wang Hsiao-p'o 王小波 (d. 994), 221
 Wang Jih-hsiu 王日休 (d. 1173), 533
 Wang Kōn 王建 (T'ae-jo of the Koryo dynasty, 877-943, r. 918-43), 522
 Wang Learning 王學, 708
 Wang Lun 王倫, rebellion of, 108
 Wang P'ang 王雱 (1044-76), 709
 Wang Ping 王稟 (d. 1126), 233
 Wang Po, 433
 Wang Po-min 王伯敏, 557
 Wang Shen 王誥, 653
 Wang Shen-chih 王審知 (862-925), 455
 Wang Sheng-to 汪聖鐸, 153
 Wang Sui 王遂 (*chin-shih* 1209), 308
 Wang Ta-yu 汪大猷 (1120-1200), 503
 Wang Tseng-yü 王曾瑜, 2
 Wang Tzu-ching 王子京, 477
 Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文慶, 606
 Wang Yang-ming 王陽明 (1472-1529), 636
 Wang Yen-sou 王巖叟 (1044-94), 281
 Wang Ying-lin 王應麟 (1223-96), 26, 51, 128
 Wang Yü-ch'eng 王禹偁 (954-1001), 635, 673
 Warehouse for Aromatics (*Hsiang-yao-k'u* 香藥庫), 465
 Warring States (476-221 BC), 21
water margin, *The (Shui-hu chuan* 水滸傳), 278
 waxed tea. *See* tea: *la-ch'a* 臘茶
 Way of the Sages (*Sheng-jen chih tao* 聖人之道), 151, 672, 673, 674, 677, 678, 681, 685, 697, 700, 712, 713, 720
 weather
 cold conditions in the late Southern Sung, 432
 Wei Chung-t'ung, 766
 Wei K'o 韋科 (later Wei Chen 韋稹), 646, 656
 Wei Liao-weng 魏了翁 (1178-1237), 42, 137, 138, 635, 786
 Wei River 渭水, 344, 356, 358
wei-chin 衛禁. *See* imperial guard and imperial palace prohibitions
wei-hsieh 偽學. *See* spurious learning
wen 文 (civil, literary and cultural expression, including the classics, histories, and *belles letters*, unit of currency), 11, 728.
 See also civil
wen 文 of antiquity, 684
Wen cui 文粹. *See* *The best of literature*
Wen hsüan 文選. *See* *Selections from refined literature*
Wen ming cheng hua 文明政化. *See* When wen is bright governance transforms
 Wen T'ien-hsiang 文天祥 (1236-83), 655
 Wen T'ung 文同 (1018-79), 577
 Wen Yen-po 文彥博 (1006-97), 97, 129
 Wen-ch'ang Bridge 文昌橋, 556
 Wen-chou 溫州 (Jui-an fu) in
 Liang-che-tung, 12, 73, 369, 396, 401, 402, 426, 433, 451, 454, 456, 478, 496, 501, 606, 669, 723
Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao 文獻通考 (*Comprehensive investigations of important documents*), 275
Wen-hsüan 文選 (*Literary selections, Selections from Refined Literature*), 44
Wen-hsüan wang miao 文宣王廟. *See* Confucian temples
wen-hsieh 文學, 667

- Wu-chi* 無極. *See* Ultimate of Non-being
Wu-ching 五經. *See* Five classics
Wu-ching Tsung-yao 武經總要 (*Essentials of the military classics*), 237
 Wu-chou 婺州 in Liang-che-tung, 371, 628, 629, 645, 649, 763, 769, 772, 785
 scholars, 764, 767, 776
 Wu-chou scholars, 769, 781
 Wu-hsi county 無錫縣 in Ch'ang-chou, Liang-che-hsi, 395
Wu-hsing 五刑. *See* punishments: Five Punishments
 Wu-k'ang county 武康縣 in Hu-chou, Liang-che-hsi, 397, 423
wu-kuan. *See* military officials
Wu-shih wai-kuo chuan 吳時外國傳, 446
wu-shui 屋稅. *See* taxes: house tax
wu-wei 無為 (non-action, non-interference), 670, 675
 Wu-wei Army 武衛軍, 217
 Wu-yuan 婺源 Shrine, 556
 Wu-yüan county 婺源縣 in Hui-chou, Chiang-nan-tung, 411
 Wu-yüeh 吳越 kingdom (907-78), 201, 366, 396, 456, 463, 464, 500, 545

ya ch' i shui-ch'ien 牙契稅錢. *See* taxes: brokers and deeds tax
ya-ch'ien 衙前. *See* office servicemen
ya-jen 牙人. *See* inn keeper/market broker
ya-pan 押班. *See* audiences: supervising the group
 Yai-shan 崖山 in Hsin-hui county, Kuang-nan-tung, 460
 Yai-shan 崖山, battle of, 249
 Yalu River, 445
 Yanagida Setsuko 柳田節子, 349
 Yang Cheng 楊政 (1098-1157), 240
 Yang Chien 楊簡 (1140-1225), 723
 Yang Hsiung 楊雄 (53-18 BC), 673, 693
 Yang I 楊億 (974-1020), 635, 674, 678
 Yang Liang-yao 楊良瑤 (736-806), 448
 Yang Shih 楊時 (1053-1135), 739, 742
 Yang Tzu-kao 楊子高, 554
 Yang Wan-li 楊萬里 (1127-1206), 71, 311, 646
 Yang Yao 楊么 (d. 1135), 242, 244
 Yang Yeh 楊業 (d. 986), 222
 Yang-chou 揚州 in Huai-nan-tung, 135, 165, 202, 442, 460, 471, 475
yang-fu 養父 (adopted daughters), 276
yang-jen 洋人. *See* foreigners
 Yang-lo-pao 陽邏堡, battle of, 249
 Yangtze delta, 349
 Yangtze River 揚子江 (*Ch'ang-chiang* 長江), 156, 221, 238, 239, 241, 243, 333, 339, 349, 381, 383, 386, 389, 400, 423, 435, 441, 442, 451, 457, 476, 527, 534
 siltage, 365
 Yangtze Valley, 337, 339, 359, 360, 363, 364, 386, 390, 392, 401, 406, 411, 414, 419, 433, 435
 Yao 堯 (one of the five emperors in ancient time), 678
 Yao Hsüan 姚鉉 (968-1020), 672
 Yao ware (*Yao-chou yao* 耀州窯), 375, 494, 499
yao-i 徭役. *See* labor service: rotational labor service
 Yeh Meng-te 葉夢得 (1077-1148), 562
 Yeh Shih 葉適 (1150-1223), 72, 134, 136, 313, 404, 414, 669, 721, 723, 724, 761, 788, 789
 Yeh T'ing-kuei 葉廷珪 (c. 1090-after 1152), 491, 509, 512, 513
yeh-jen 野人. *See* slaves: wild men
 Yellow Emperor, 604
 Yellow Register retreat, 603

- wen-kuan*. See civil officials
- wen-shih* 文士 (men with literary ability, literary *shih*), 34, 720
- Wen-te-tien* 文德殿. See Hall of Civil Virtue
- wen-ts'ai* 文采 (decorations), 718
- Wen-tsung 唐文宗 (808-40, r, 826-40) of the T'ang, 48
- Wen-yüan ying-hua* 文苑英華 (*Blossoms from the garden of literature, Finest blossoms from the park of literature*), 44
- West, Stephen, 529, 565, 632
- Western Asia, 663
- Western Chin 西晉 dynasty (265-316), 362
- Western Hsia. See Hsi Hsia kingdom
- Western inscription (*Hsi ming* 西銘), 707, 744
- Western Outer Office of Clan Affairs (Hsi-wai tsung-cheng ssu 西外宗政司), 482
- western route (*hsi-bang lu* 西行路), 445
- Western Troops (Hsi-ping 西兵), 232
- wheat, 172, 357, 394, 418
cultivation in south China, 419
- When *wen* is bright governance transforms (*Wen ming cheng hua* 文明政化), 671
- White Deer Grotto Academy (*Pai-lu-tung shu-yüan* 白鹿洞書院), 295, 309, 311, 312, 753, 774
- wine monopoly. See government monopolies
- wineshops, 141
- women
adoption of girls, 276
concubines, 582
concubines and maids, 79, 569
courtesans, 569, 583, 584, 589
dangers of, 578
divorce, 277
dowries, 278, 279, 580, 581, 585, 587, 591, 593
elite, 14-15
footbinding, 569, 574
inheritance by, 279
literacy of, 588
male-female separation, 572
occupations outside the home, 584
palace women, 92
as teachers, 589
vulnerability of, 575
weavers, 579, 585
widows, 580
women's medicine (*fu-k'o* 婦科), 570, 575
writers and poetry, 588-9
workshops (*tso-fang* 作坊) for weapons and body armor, 233
- Wrigley, E. A., 663
- Writings by various Confucians for propagating the Tao* (*Chu ju ming-tao chi* 諸儒鳴道集), 735, 737, 755, 757
- written elucidations (*mo-i* 墨義), 288
- wu* 無 (non-being), 706
- Wu Chieh 吳玠 (1093-1139), 239, 242
- wu ch'u-shen* 無出身 (without qualification), 57
- Wu county 吳縣 in Su-chou, Liang-che-hsi, 343, 398
- Wu fang* 五房. See Secretariat-Chancellery: Five Offices (Wu fang 五房)
- Wu Hsi 吳曦 (1162-1207), 247
- Wu Jen-ch'en 吳任臣 (c. 1628-c. 1689), 464
- Wu Lin 吳璘 (1102-67), 240, 245
- Wu Tzu-mu 吳自牧 (ca. 1256-after 1334), 315, 573
- Wu Yung 吳泳 (b. 1181, chin-shih 1208), 89
- Wu-ch'ang county 武昌縣 in O-chou, Ching-hu-pei, 421

- Yellow River (Huang-ho 黃河), 28,
201, 230, 241, 329, 337, 356,
357, 373, 380, 381, 383, 390,
399, 443
flooding, 336
shifting course of, 338
- Yellow Sea, 441
- Yen 燕 (modern Hopei), 222
- Yen-ch 'eng 鄆城 (in modern Honan),
242
- Yen-ching 燕京 (Yu-chou 幽州,
modern Peking 北京), 237
battle of, 222
- Yen-chou 兗州 (Hsi-ch'ing-fu 襲慶府)
in Ching-tung-hsi, 295
- Yen-chou 嚴州 in Liang-che-hsi, 426,
783, 784
- Yen-hai chih-chih shih-ssu* 沿海制置使
司. *See* Office of the Imperial
Commissioner for the Control
and Organization of the Coastal
Areas
- Yen-hai tu chih-chih shih* 沿海都制置使.
See General of Coastal Defense
- yen-kuan* 言官 (speaking officials – in the
Bureau of Policy Criticism), 104
- Yen-t'ieh pu* 鹽鐵部. *See* Salt and Iron
Office
- Yen-t'ieh ssu* 鹽鐵司. *See* Salt and Iron
Monopoly Bureau
- yen-ting* 鹽丁. *See* neighboring salt
farmers
- yen-ts'u ch'ien* 鹽醋錢 (“salt and vinegar
cash”, fee paid for winning a
legal dispute), 164. *See also*
huan-hsi ch'ien
- Yen-tzu 晏子 (521–490 BC), 779
- Yi Huang 李滉 (T'oegye 退溪,
1501–70), 785
- yin* 引 (vouchers). *See also* ch'ao 鈔, 186
- yin* 銀 (silver), 466
- yin* and *yang* 陰陽, 571, 700, 716, 780
- Yin Ch'ung-k'o 尹崇珂, 465
- yin* privilege. *See* protection privilege
- Yin Tun 尹焞 (1071–1142), 701
- yin-chih* 印紙 (“stamped papers”,
dossier), 63
- Yin-t'ai ssu* 銀臺司. *See* document
processing: Transmission Office
- ying* 營 (regiment), 216
- Ying-ch'ang prefecture 潁昌府 in
Ching-hsi-pei, *also* Hsü-chou 徐
州, 242
- ying-ch'ing* 影青. *See* bluish-greenish-
white wares
- ying-t'ien* 營田. *See* agriculture: state
farmlands
- Ying-t'ien-fu 應天府 (Southern capital
南京 of the Northern Sung) in
Ching-tung-hsi, 248
- Ying-t'ien-shan Academy (*Ying-t'ien-
shan Ching-she* 應天山精舍),
295
- Ying-tsao fa-shih* 營造法式. *See* *Manual
on architecture*
- Ying-tsung 英宗 (Chao Shu 趙曙,
1032–67, r. 1063–67), 81, 90,
105, 119, 224, 225, 296
- ying-yün* (營運). *See* operations
- Ying-yün t'ung-t'ien sheng-ming wen-wu
huang-ti* 應運統天聖明文武皇
帝 (In Accord With Fortune and
In Unity With Heaven, the
Sagacious and Enlightened,
Civil and Martial August
Sovereign), 82
- Yoji Asami 浅見洋二, 527
- yu ch'u-shen* 有出身 (with formal
qualification), 57. *See also*
ch'u-shen 出身
- Yu Hsiu-ling 游修齡, 362
- yu wei* 有爲 (accomplish something),
688
- yu-ch'uan* 郵傳. *See* courier-transport
system
- Yu-huan chi-wen* 游宦紀聞, 450
- yu-hsüan* 右選 (right selection in the
Ministry of Personnel), 50

- yu-jen* 游人 (roamers), 633
yu-pan 右班 (right section), 652
yu-ti 郵遞. *See* courier transport system
Yu-ts'ao 右曹 (Right Section in the Ministry of Revenue), 154
Yu-ts'ao shih-lang 右曹侍郎. *See* Ministry of Revenue: Right Vice Minister of Revenue
Yu-yang tsa-tsu 酉陽雜俎 (*Miscellany of Youyang mountains*), 443
Yü 禹 (one of the five emperors in ancient time), 678
Yü Chi 虞集 (1272–1348), 648
Yü Chieh 余玠 (d. 1253), 248
yü min cheng li 與民爭利 (compete for profits against its own people), 461
yü ... 與 ... 游 (roam with), 633
Yü Yün-wen 虞允文 (1110–74), 245
yü-ch'ien 御前 (before the emperor), 243
yü-ch'ien chu-chün 御前諸軍. *See* army: palace armies
Yü-ch'ien Hsun-wei Army 御前巡衛軍, 240
Yü-hai 玉海 (Jade sea), 26
yü-lu 語錄. *See* records of words
yü-lun 與論. *See* public opinion
yü-mai 預買 (cash loans to farmers in the spring against payment in silk cloth later in the year), 199
yü-pi shou-chao 御筆手詔 (imperial brushed hand-written edicts), 42
yü-shih 御試. *See* palace examination
Yü-shih chung-ch'eng 御史中丞. *See* Censorate: Vice Censor-in-chief
yü-ying shih 御營使, 132
yüan 元, 703
Yüan 元 dynasty (1260–1368), xv, 5, 17, 18, 284, 285, 435, 458, 543, 585, 604, 629, 660, 730, 782, 785
 local elites in, 659
Yüan Cheng 袁征, 310
Yüan Hsieh 袁燮 (1144–1224), 723
Yüan Hsing-tsung 員興宗 (d. 1170), 669
Yüan Miao-tsung 元妙宗, 606
Yüan tien chang 元典章 (*Statutes and precedents of the sacred administration of the great Yüan dynastic state*), 275, 278
Yüan Ts'ai 袁采 (1140–95), 410, 574, 575, 579, 582, 583, 585, 587, 765
Yüan-chou 袁州 in Chiang-nan-hsi, 361, 382, 412
Yüan-feng reforms 元豐改革 (1080–82), 27, 60, 63, 88, 99, 100, 104, 114, 125, 128, 129, 134, 137, 138, 152
Yüan-shih shih-fan 袁氏世範 (*Precepts for social life*), 765
yüan-wai-lang 員外郎 (Vice Director of a Ministry), 56
Yüan-yu conservatives, 728, 733, 762, 776
yüan-yüan 元元, 703
Yüeh Fei 岳飛 (1103–42), 2, 85, 239, 240, 241, 242, 306, 600, 654
Yüeh 越 kilns at Tung-men-k'ou 東門口, 454
Yüeh K'o 岳珂 (1183–1240), 654
Yüeh Shih 樂史 (930–1007), 643
Yüeh-chia chün 岳家軍. *See* Tung-ching Regency Army
Yüeh-chou 越州 in Liang-che-tung, 473
yüeh-chuang ch'ien 月椿錢, *yüeh-chuang ta-chün ch'ien* 月椿大軍錢 (cash monthly remitted to the imperial armies), 163
Yüeh-lu Academy (*Yüeh-lu shu-yüan* 嶽麓書院, Mountain slope or Marchmount hill academy), 295, 309, 735
Yüeh-nan 越南. *See* Vietnam
Yüeh-yao 越窯 kilns, 494, 500, 501
Yün 運, 703

- Yün 雲 (modern Shansi province), 222
 Yün-i Army 雲翼軍, 217
 Yün-nan 雲南, 518
 yung 用 (function in governance), 728
 Yung-chia county 永嘉縣, 12, 669, 723
 Yung-chia statecraft school, 12
 statecraft theory, 724
 Yung-chia Learning (*Yung-chia hsiieh* 永嘉學), 313
 Yung-chia scholars, 669, 723
 Yung-chou 邕州 in Kuang-nan-hsi, 229
 Yung-feng county 永豐縣 in Chi-chou, Chiang-nan-hsi, 647
 Yung-hsing-chün circuit 永興軍路, 144, 273, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 344, 354, 355, 356, 358, 380, 382, 386, 387, 389, 390, 432
yung-kan hsiao-yung fa 勇敢效用法. *See* army: brave volunteer system
 Yung-lo 永樂 city, 230
Yung-lo ta-tien 永樂大典 (*Yung-lo encyclopedia*), 24
Yung-lung t'ung-pao 永隆通寶 iron coins, 486
 Zaccia, Paolo, 260
 Zanzibar, 503, 504, 513, 518, 519